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CAPTAIN'S ROMANCE

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MISS MADAM.

CHAPTER I.

An old man and an old woman, a pale young fellow and a girl, sat at a table placed upon a long veranda.

"Now I wonder who that can be," said the old man, craning his neck and looking down the road. The girl and the young fellow got up that they might obtain a better view, and the woman, with an air of keen curiosity, leaned over the table, gazed down the road, and, with a woman's quickness to discover intention, declared: "He's goin' to stop. See, pap?" clutching the old man's arm. "He's goin' to come in at the big gate."

"He's not goin' to do no sich of a thing," the man replied. "He's—hanged if he ain't. Wonder who he can be. Ridin' putty good stock, any how."

The horseman who had thus turned a quiet noon hour into a speculation of deep concern rode up to the yard fence, and, following a time-set fashion of that part of the country, cried: "Hello!"

"Git down and come in," the old man answered. He had arisen from the table and was advancing to meet the stranger. "Come right in, suh, and make yo'self at home."

The girl vanished; the young fellow hung about and stole an occasional peep at the visitor. It was evident that strangers were rare in that neighborhood.

"We have jest been eatin' a snack," said the old man, when he had shown the stranger into the house. "Won't you eat a mouthful or so? Don't reckon, however, that you will find much to yo' taste."

"Pap," the woman suddenly interposed, appearing in the door and wringing her apron in embarrassed consciousness of the temerity of thus presenting herself, "if he'll wait a minit I'll kill a chicken and bake some biscuit, for goodness knows we ain't got nuthin' that is fitten for a body to eat."

"Oh, don't let me put you to any trouble," the visitor protested. "I'm sure that anything you've got is good enough for me."

He was so easy in manner and so cordial of voice that the woman, yielding, though reluctantly, it could be seen, said: "Wall, if you think you can put up with it, you are perfectly welcome. Pap, fetch a cheer for the gentleman."

They seated themselves at the table, but the girl and the young fellow did not re-appear. The girl, peeping from behind the ash hopper, and speaking to the young fellow, who had taken refuge behind a corner of the smoke-house, said:

"He looks mighty fine, Little Dave."

"A fiddle ain't no whar to him," the boy answered.

"Little Dave," the old man called, "why don't you and Miss Madam come along here now and finish eatin' yo' dinner?"

"Don't want no mo'."

The visitor looked up, and the girl and young fellow dodged out of sight.

In some parts of the country this would have been regarded as an odd family, but in a certain wild region of Kentucky, old man Bradshaw's "folks" were quite conventional. The head of the household was somewhat of a neighborhood character. He was tall and gaunt, with a large, pioneer sort of nose, and with an uneven, grayish beard. He had a backwoodsman's idea of the ludicrous, that broad estimate of fun which, when refined but not too much toned down, approaches the establishment of a distinctive class of American humor; and emphasizing his conception of the ridiculous, as though an atonement must be offered, there was a pathetic note somewhere in the gamut of his voice. When a young man, he had built a house on a hill

side, near a spring that gushed from under a rugged bluff, green the year round—eternity's moss covering the rock of ages. Here he and his wife had spent many a year of toil, and it was here, in an old orchard, that they expected to be buried.

The woman, too, was in her way a type. She had two great fears; one that she might not possibly have received enough of the spirit when, years ago, she had sprung up from the mourners' bench and shouted in the almost frenzied ecstacy of her soul's deliverance from torment. She was supremely—she thought divinely—happy for months afterward, but gradually she began to fear that her conversion had been too violent, and that Satan must either have had a hand in the work, or had at least thrown in a suggestion or two. Sometimes her faith would be perfect, and not a cloud could she see in her serene sky of hope. Then she would go about the yard, singing. Everything seemed to inspire her, and new songs came to her as she stood, with her arms resting on the fence, gazing down the lonely road. The breeze that stirred her hair was a whisper of love, and the sunlight that fell in the lane was a smile of encouragement. Suddenly, and without a warning gradation from this mount of assured paradise, she would sink into the valley of doubt. The breeze that stirred her hair was harsh with reproach, and the sunlight that fell in the lane

was a threatening flame. Then she would hasten to the field where her husband was at work.

"Pap, I jest know I ain't elected."

"How do you know? You ain't seen all the votes yet, have you?"

"For mussy sake don't talk that way when a body is in sich distress. Oh, I have done the best I can, the Lord knows."

"Wall, if you have, you are all right, I reckon. You trust in the Saviour, don't you?"

"Oh, yes, with all my soul."

"Wall, then, nothin' can't hurt yo' soul. Go on back to the house now, and rest easy."

If one of these supplicating visits should happen to be near the noon hour, the old fellow would slyly hint that he didn't feel very well either, and that a bite to eat would help him mightily.

Mrs. Bradshaw's other fear was that people who visited her house might go away and "norate it around" that they didn't get enough to eat while there, and she had been known to slip out at night and kill a chicken to keep down the possibility of slander. The old man often said that nothing on the place was safe, not even a setting goose, whenever any body chanced to "drap in." Once, when she was delirious with fever, her husband awoke at night and found that she was gone. He heard a chicken squawl, and then he found her in the hen

house, reaching up and tugging at the feet of an old Shanghai rooster.

With regard to the comer who had so cheerfully agreed to take pot-luck, even though he was courteous and cordial, there arose grave suspicions, and those fatal words, "norate it around," seemed to whisper themselves into the woman's mind during the meal; but after dinner, when they sat in the "big room," talking with pleasant freedom, she wondered how so good-natured a man could possibly "slander a body."

"I have had yo' hoss put up and fed," the old man remarked when the visitor, slightly leaning back, looked toward the fence. "I didn't reckon you wanted to go any farther this evenin'."

"No, if you don't mind my staying all night. I have ridden pretty hard to-day and am somewhat tired."

"You are mo' than welcome, suh. Let's see, what is yo' name?"

"Andrews."

"Any kin to Pete Andrews over in Hackett county?"

"I think not."

"Wall, you needn't be ashamed to claim kin with him, for he's much of a man. Seen him tie a feller bigger'n him one day at Boyd's mill. Jest snatched a hold of him, suh, and nachully tied him; and eat!

Let me tell you: One time a passul of us at a log rollin' 'gunter talk about eatin', and John Sanderson, the one that married Sis Perdue——"

"He married Liza Perdue," Mrs. Bradshaw mildly suggested.

"The one that married Sis Perdue," the old man repeated.

"Papa, I tell you it was Liza Perdue, for I recolleck mighty well the day they was married. I was standin' at the big gate and here come Sam Hargiss on the old mar' that he afterwards swopped to Sol Faldin and 'lowed, he did, that Jeff Hawkins had split his foot open with an axe and that John Sanderson had jest married Liza Perdue. I recolleck it jest like it was yistidy."

"All right," said the old man, "have it yo' own way, for it don't make no difference no how. What I was goin' to say is this: A passul of us 'gunter to talk about eatin', and John Sanderson——"

"The one that married Liza Perdue," Mrs. Bradshaw observed, slightly inclining her head toward the visitor.

"Wall, ding it all, the one that married Liza Ann Perdue——"

"Her name wan't Liza Ann, pap. It wan't nothin' but Liza. You are thinkin' about Lizzie Ann, the one next to the youngest."

The old man was silent for a few moments, and

then, stroking his beard, said: "I wish I may die if I ever seen the like. Confound the Perdue family anyhow. The old man borrowed a bull-tongue plow from me once and I wish I may never stir agin if he didn't swop it for a shuck collar and a pair of hames. But," he added, nodding at the visitor, "what I wanted to git at is this: A passul of us was at a log-rollin' and the question of who could eat the most come up and John Sanderson 'lowed in a sort of off-hand way that he did reckon he could eat mo' roasted goose eggs when he was right at himself than any man he ever seen. Now this was a leetle grain mo' than Pete Andrews could stand, bein' a high-strung sort of feller, and he spit his tobacker out of his mouth, he did, and says: 'Are you right at yo'self to-day?' And then John Sanderson sort of felt of himself and studied a while and 'lowed that he reckoned he was. 'Well, then,' said Pete, 'about how many do you think you can chamber?' John studied a while and 'lowed that he didn't know exactly how many he could chamber, but that he would eat agin Pete and have an understandin' that the one that eat the least had to pay for all. Wall, they pitched in and Sanderson swallowed eleven, but Andrews he raised a great shout of victory by swallowin' thirteen. I tell you he wan't no common man even in them days when great men was a heap mo' plentyful than they are now. So you wan't no kin to him?"

"No, I have no relatives in this State."

"You live away off yander somewhar, I reckon?"

"Yes, a long ways."

"Don't look like you been uster doing much work."

"Pap," the woman interposed, "don't talk thater way. Everybody don't have to work themselves to death like us.

"Wall, 'Lizabeth, I sholy didn't mean no harm, for I had an old uncle in No'th Klina that never done no work, and he was a putty good sort of a fellar, too, I'll tell you."

The visitor laughed in so good natured a way that the man laughed, and then from the outside there came a tittering that caused the old woman to hasten to the door. "Miss Madam, what's the matter with you and Little Dave out thar?" she asked. "Can't you behave yo'selfs and not dodge about a gigglin' like a lot of geese?"

"Geese don't giggle; they squawks," came from the outside.

"Let 'em alone, 'Lizabuth," said the old man, smiling. "Let 'em enjoy themselves while they can."

"They are your children, I suppose," the visitor remarked.

"Wall, that is to say, partly," the old man answered. "Miss Madam is our daughter—the only

child we ever had except Jedge that the guerrillas killed durin' the war—but Little Dave ain't no kin to us. We took him to raise befo' Miss Madam was borned, 'cause he was a little bit of a crippled thing that nobody didn't want, but he always was a mighty peart child, and bless you, he can do a power of good with a hoe now. He's crowdin' twenty putty close, and Miss Madam is going on seventeen."

"Why do you call her Miss Madam?"

"I reckon that name do sound strange to folks that don't understand it, and I'll tell you exactly how it come about: A long time ago, when me and wife was movin' out here, our hoss—the only one we had—drapped down in the road and died. Laws a mussy, how we was troubled, for we didn't know what to do, not havin' but a few dimes, and we know'd that thar wan't no use in tryin' to go on without a hoss, as we couldn't do nothin' after we got thar toward raisin' a crap. While we was standin' thar, mournin', along come a carriage, and right close to it come a man on a hoss. The carriage was as bright as a new dollar, and the man looked like a governor. Wall, when they got up to whar we was, they stopped, and the man asked: 'What's the matter with yo' hoss?' 'Nothin's the matter with him now, suh,' I said. 'He might have been powerful sick a few minits ago, but he's dead now.' 'Is that the only hoss you've got?'

he asked. 'Yes,' said I, 'and I ain't got him now, and the Lord only knows how I'm going to make a crap.' Jest then the sweetest face I ever seen—the face of a woman—showed at the winder of the carriage. The dog-wood blossoms and the red-bud bloom had give her their color, and the dew-draps from the grape-vines had fell in her eyes. When she seen my wife a standin' thar a cryin', she asked, 'And is that really the only hoss you had?'

"'Yes, mam,' my wife answered, wringin' her hands.

"'And you say you can't make a crap?'

"'We can't do nothin' now that the hoss is dead, and we mout as well die, too.'

"Then the woman sorter leaned out of the carriage, and with a smile that put me in mind of a mornin' in spring after a rain had fell the night befo', said: 'Jedge, get down and give them yo' hoss!'

"Madam,' said he, 'it shall be jest as you say,' and befo' I knowed what was bein' done, I was so astonished, the bridle rein was in my hand, my wife was on her knees, and the carriage was gone. We never could find out thar names—all we knowd was Jedge and Madam—so when our boy was borned—the one that was killed—we called him Jedge, and when the little girl come we called her Madam, but being such a little bit of a thing, and Madam sound-

in' most too big for her, we added the Miss. 'Lizabuth, step thar to the do' and tell the children we won't go out to the field ag'in this evenin'."

CHAPTER II.

THE house was a double-log structure, one-story and a half high, with a broad open passage between the two sections, and with the shaky gallery, that served as a summer dining place, running out in apparent aimlessness from the passage. The neighbors said that old Bradshaw, having more clapboards than he knew what to do with, built the roof as a sort of joke, and was then compelled to put down the floor as a necessity.

Andrews did not see the children at supper, but when he went to bed in a half-room at the top of the house, he heard them giggling in some mysterious hiding-place; and as he lay, sunk down into the old feather bed with a feeling of helpless comfort, he heard them giggle again, and then he heard rain pattering on the roof, close above his head. Rain on an old roof gently rocks the cradle for "nature's soft nurse." There comes no nervous dream, taken with the flash-light of a

disturbed mind, flitting in troublous zig-zag, but there is a semi-consciousness, a pleasurable sinking into deeper comfort, and a thankfulness through it all that the rain is falling so close overhead. Listlessly the visitor felt, rather than dreamed, that he was again a plowboy on the old farm, dreading the summons to get up and feed the horses; and reaching out he put his arm around the restful ease of morning drowsiness, and hugged it closer to him, loth to part with it, shrinking from the thought of blazing corn-rows, where the sweaty horse lashed his tail at the flies, where the spider fled along the strands of its rudely-broken web, where the rusty toad, with a dismal croak, rolled upon its back in the new-made furrow. Suddenly he started and looked about the room. Old man Bradshaw had rapped on the stairway, and had called:

"Come on now, mister, and eat a snack."

It was Sunday morning, and as Andrews stood on the veranda he thought that he had never before seen a day so bright. Nature had smiled in her sleep, and had awakened with a laugh. The old-time roses in the yard held up their pouting lips to be pleased, as half-spoiled children do; and a resplendent hollyhock that grew near the kitchen, and about whose roots the coffee grounds were poured every morning, devoid of warmth, seemed

happy in the contemplation of its own gaudy dress.

"Jest set right down and fall to," said old man Bradshaw, and then with a sly wink he added: "'Lizabuth must have got up befo' day, and declared war on the chickens, for about 3 o'clock I heard the old Shanghai squawl like thar wan't no mo' hope left on the face of the yeth."

"Now, pap," his wife protested in meek annoyance, seating herself at the foot of the table near the steaming coffee pot, and smoothing her hair in an embarrassed way, "if you keep on talkin' like that folks will think that I ain't got right good sense; but a body has to live, I reckon, and if chickens ain't to eat, I'd like to know what they was put here for. Jest pass yo' plate, Mr. Andrews."

"Why don't Miss Madam and Little Dave come along here now, and quit their everlasting foolishness?" the old man asked, looking toward the kitchen door. "Enough of anything is enough, and too much don't taste sweet at all."

Andrews heard a suppressed giggle, and then there came on the quick conveyance of an excited whisper, the words — "Don't do that — don't shove me out there!"

"Come on here, now," Bradshaw demanded, "we don't want no mo' of that foolishness, and won't have it, nuther."

Little Dave stepped out upon the porch, and cautiously advanced toward the table. Andrews saw an under-size young man — a mere boy — pale, despite the seeming effort the sun had made to brown his face, with hair almost white, and with one leg apparently much smaller and shorter than the other. His eyes were almost as colorless as a potato vine that had grown in a cellar, and his thin, drawn lips spoke, the guest fancied, in impressive silence of many and many a night of lonely suffering. The girl came out. A bashful smile put her shyness in italics, and laid embarrassed stress upon her red timidity. Her eyes were brown, and her wayward hair inspired a thought of a ripening corn silk that a perfumed breeze had tangled. She was beautiful. Even an old man, gazing upon her, would have been thrilled. Andrews was young. He cared no longer to listen in silence to what the old man might say, but began to talk. He told a pleasing story, and Miss Madam laughed. He was so free, so easy. They had never seen any one like him.

After breakfast, while the old man and Little Dave were feeding the stock, Andrews continued to sit at the table, looking at the girl as she took away the dishes.

"Have you ever been to school?" he asked.

"Not much," she answered.

"I suppose you'd like to go."

"Yes, but it's most too late, now. I was at school one day, me and Little Dave, and a man rode up to the schoolhouse and shot the teacher and killed him. That was a long time ago, and thar hasn't been any school thar sence. The teacher had whipped a boy, and that was the reason the man killed him."

"Would you come to me if I should take up a school?"

"If pap says so I would, but I'm afraid that me and Little Dave couldn't go until we git through hoeing the corn."

"Do you have to hoe corn?"

"Yes, when it's in the grass much I do. Pap wouldn't make me, but I hate to see him and Little Dave out in the field all by themselves."

"But I should think that you'd rather stay at the house and help your mother."

"I would sometimes."

"Why not at all times?"

She turned and looked about, and seeing her mother standing at the yard gate, looking down the lonely road, resumed her work without answering; but after a few moments she said: "Mother cries so much sometimes that I can't bear to see her. She's afraid the Lord don't love her, but I know He does, and pap knows it, too. Yonder comes pap and Little Dave."

"Come out under the trees whar the air is stirrin'," said the old man when he had placed a basket on the veranda. "Fetch a cheer with you."

When they had sat down under a tree, Andrews said that he had thought of continuing his journey, but that the idea of taking up a school in the community had just occurred to him. "What do you think of it?" he asked.

"Wall, if you ain't got no particular place to go to, and if nobody in particular ain't expectin' you, I don't know but it would be as good plan as any; but thar's this about it: You won't git much of a sprinklin' of scholars till the corn is laid by. Miss Madam could go most of the time, and Little Dave could go rainy days; but if it's money you're after, why, I ruther think you can do better in most any sort of business."

"I don't care for the money that might be in it."

"Wall, if that's the case, you can jest teach a school in this neighborhood as long as you are a mind to." "'Lizabuth," he called, "what's the matter with you this mornin'?"

"Pap," she said, slowly turning her face toward him, "I jest know that I ain't elected."

"Don't, now, 'Lizabuth; I say don't give up that way. Come over here and set down. Come on," he softly pleaded, going to her. He led her

under the tree, and placed her on his chair. "Don't now."

"Pap, thar's a certain number to be saved and a certain number to be lost."

"Thar, now, don't. You'll feel better after a while. What's dark now will be bright by and by. The Son of Man didn't die in vain. Come, we'll go out in the woods and talk it over."

He led her away and Andrews went back to the veranda. The girl was sweeping and the cripple sat on the floor with his back against the wall. The visitor sat down on a rickety chair, and after gazing in the direction which the old man and his wife had taken, turned to the young man, and with an air of rather pleasing familiarity, said: "Ah, by the way, Little Dave, I suppose you would like to go to school, wouldn't you?"

"I don't know," he answered, spitting through his teeth. "I uster think that I'd like to go to school long enough to be a doctor, but I reckon I'm gittin' along a little too much for that now."

"I wouldn't like to be a doctor," the girl spoke up, "for I have heard it said that they cut up dead folks."

"I wouldn't mind that," said Little Dave. "After Mil Pursley's head had been split open by a hoss kickin' him, I stood by and seen a doctor sew it up, and never flinched, nuther. Why did you want to know whuther I'd like to go to school or not?"

"Because I was thinking of taking up a school in this neighborhood."

"No, don't believe I want to go. Miss Madam," he added, "do you want to go to meetin' to-day?"

"No, I can't. Mother and pap are goin' and I'll have to stay and git dinner. Are you goin', mister?"

"No," Andrews answered, "for the truth is, I rode so hard yesterday that I don't care to do any riding to-day. Are you going, Little Dave?"

The cripple glanced quickly at Andrews and simply said: "No."

Mrs. Bradshaw appeared to be in better spirits when she and the old man returned from the woods, but occasionally as she busied herself with preparations for the ride to church there was a nervous outcropping of the distressing anxiety through which she had passed. While Bradshaw was attempting to tighten the saddle girth, the old gray mare squealed maliciously and reaching around bit a handful of hair from the top of his head; and in a frenzy he seized a fence rail, knocked her down, and then clapping a hand on his head, swore furiously.

"Oh, for mussy sake, pap, don't! Oh! please, don't," his wife pleaded.

"What in the deuce then do you expect me to do, hah," he cried, turning upon her with a sharp-cut grin of agony, "didn't you see her bite mighty nigh all the hair offen the top of my head? Do you reckon

I'm goin' to stand here and call her honey after that? Whoa, here now. Oh, you better stand still or I'll maul the day lights outen you. You good for nothin' wretch, and I give you two years of corn extra, twice within a week. Blast yo' old hide I'll maul you till you can't see. Stand round here, now."

"Pap, if you keep on that way I'll be afraid that you ain't elected nuther."

"I'd ruther not be elected than to have all my hair bit out by the roots!" he exclaimed. "Dog my cats if I'm goin' to stand it. Talk about bein' elected when a fool mare is snappin' all the hair offen me. Wisht I may die dead if I ever was hurt as bad in my life. Whoa, now. Oh, I'll maul yo' old head into a loblolly if you don't quit yo' prancin'. Come on here now, 'Lizabuth, and let me help you up."

Andrews, the girl and Little Dave stood looking after the old man and his wife until a bend far down the leafy road hid them from view.

"I must go and gather some snap beans for dinner," said Miss Madam, turning away.

"And I will go and help you," Andrews gallantly volunteered.

"No," Little Dave spoke up, "I am goin' with her. We don't want to impose on company."

"Oh, it would be no imposition, but a pleasure,"

Andrews declared, and he went with them to the garden, although he felt that by one at least his presence was not desired. Little Dave carried a dish-pan into which the beans were put, and several times when Andrews attempted to deposit a handful, the cripple adroitly, and with the appearance of accident, moved the pan so that the beans might fall on the ground. "You little wretch," the visitor mused, "I'd like to shake that ill-mannered sullenness out of you."

"Why, Mr. Andrews!" the girl exclaimed, "you are flingin' 'em on the ground."

"Yes, he makes the pan dodge me," replied Andrews.

"I ain't doin' nothin' of the sort," Little Dave replied. "I reckon the trouble is you are cross-eyed."

"Oh, you ought to be ashamed of yo'self, Little Dave," she cried. "That ain't no way to talk about company, and if you don't mind I'll tell pap when he comes back. Don't pay no attention to him, Mr. Andrews, for he don't mean what he says."

"Yes, I do, too."

"Now, Little Dave, you jest know you don't."

"Do, too."

"Come on now, we've got enough," said Miss Madam. "I can string 'em without anybody helpin' me."

"Won't you let me help you?" Andrews asked.

"No," said the cripple. "I am goin' to help her."

Andrews, disgusted with the boy, lighted a pipe and lay down under a tree in the yard. "I wish that fool boy wasn't here," he mused. "What a restful place this is! What an elysium after nights that were heated with the fever of gluttony. Oh, cooling shades of simple life, if I had breathed thy atmosphere—I am a fool," he broke off, turning over. "I am catching at the ravelings of a tattered sentiment. But ought I stay here and attempt to teach school? Why ask myself so silly a question? That child's face flutters in my bosom. Look here, Mr.—Andrews—I never credited you with having much sound sense, but hang it, sir, you are disappointing."

He sank into a reverie, half in the darkness of sleep and half in the light of consciousness, as the slowly waving boughs above threw shadows or sifted sun-glints on his face. The boughs ceased waving and he slept, a dark shade lying on his countenance.

"Come on and let's eat a snack," cried old Bradshaw. He had just turned loose the old gray mare, yea, had just dealt her a blow with the bridle, still holding a memory of her ingratitude.

Andrews started up, and as if he would rub off the dark shade, passed his hand over his face. "All

right," he answered, "I'll be with you in a moment."

Old Mrs. Bradshaw hummed a sacred tune as she assisted her daughter in putting the dishes on the table. Her face was radiant with the indescribable light of a Christian's hope, and her eyes were aglow with the soft effulgence of her soul's tranquility.

"You appear to be happy," Andrews said as he approached the table.

"Yes, for I feel now that I am elected. The clouds have been mighty dark, but the sun shined out at last. I'm afraid that you won't find the dinner to yo' likin', suh, but Miss Madam has done the best she can, I reckon."

"If I knowed that I was elected," said the old man, softly chuckling; "it wouldn't make no difference whuther a body liked my dinner or not."

"Now, pap, you oughten ter talk that way, and you know it. It do seem to me sometimes that you would make fun of anything on the face of the yeth. But I reckon you can't help it. I reckon it was jest nachully borned in you. Mr. Andrews, you must help yo'self and not wait for pap, for he never was a hand to help a body."

"Well," replied the old fellow, "this is the first I ever heard of that. I'll help his plate as fast as he can empty it and that is about all anybody can do."

CHAPTER III.

THE days passed, but Andrews said nothing more about taking the school, except on one occasion when he remarked that it would better to wait until the corn should be "laid by." Old Bradshaw and his wife appeared to be much pleased with him. At evening and sometimes at noon, he would read Spurgeon's sermons to them, from a tattered book that had mysteriously found its way into the neighborhood; and the old man, with his chair tilted back against the wall, never failed to go to sleep, and his wife never failed to chide him. The visitor essayed to show his usefulness in more than one way, and once he made a pretense of helping Miss Madam and Little Dave hoe a piece of creek bottom corn where the land had been "broken up" wet and which was too cloddy to be plowed, but the heat of the sun soon drove him in the shade. The girl laughed gleefully at his lack of endurance and said that he ought to wear a sun-bonnet and tie it under his chin as she did. The boy did not laugh, nor did he express the contempt he felt, fearing that he might arouse Andrews' pride and thereby nerve him to the determination of overcoming his aversion for

the toilsome employment. Andrews went into the deep woods and sat on a log in a small, new-made clearing where a lank and stoop-shouldered man was riving clapboards.

"Don't reckon you ever done any work of this sort," said the man.

"No, I don't think I ever did."

"You don't think so? Why, if you'd ever have done it you'd know it blamed well, and there wouldn't be any thinkin' about it. You are stoppin' at Bradshaws, ain't you?"

"Yes."

"Hearn you are goin' to take up a school."

"I was thinking of doing so."

"You was thinkin' so, eh? You don't pear to know nothin' for certain. Jest sorter think so all the time. Don't see how you could l'arn a child much. Don't believe I'd sign for mor'n a third of a scholar. Wall, I must be goin'. Hope you've got sense enough to find yo' way out of here."

He took up his frow and slouched himself away; and Andrews, stretching himself on a log, mused and dozed in the shade, lulled by the soft, varying and never familiar harmonies of a thousand buzzings, as far off and as subdued as an echo, and yet as close as a song poured directly into the ear. A rustling of the dry leaves on the ground startled him, and looking up he saw Miss Madam coming toward him.

"We've got that piece of corn done," she said, "and I ain't got nothin' to do now but go after the cows and drive 'em home."

"Sit down and rest yourself."

"I ain't very tired," she rejoined, seating herself on the log.

"But you must be nearly roasted with that hot sunbonnet."

"I am pretty warm." She took off her bonnet and sat swinging it by the strings.

"You were never in town, were you?"

"No, not exactly, but I went with pap once when he went 'way over on the other side of the ridge to vote, and we eat dinner with a man that lived thar, and jest before we started home we saw some men get into a fight and one of them was cut nearly all to pieces with a knife. I reckon they do worse than that in a regular town whar they vote all the time. Pap says that he wouldn't live in a town, and he has been thar, but he knows that some of the people that live thar are good and kind, for the jedge and his wife that give pap and mother the hoss must have lived in town, but Little Dave says that he bet he didn't, but Little Dave is mighty briggity some times. I must go on after the cows."

"I will go with you."

"I am goin' with her," said Little Dave, coming out of the bushes.

"Why, how come you here?" she cried,

"How come you here?" he asked.

"Why, I jest come, that's all."

"Wall, I jest come too, but that ain't all."

"I didn't tell you to help me drive up the cows."

"You didn't tell him, nuther."

"But he can go if he wants to, can't he, Mr. Smarty?"

"Yes, and I can go too, whuther he wants me to or not."

"Oh, you think you are so smart."

"That's all right. I'm goin' with you after them cows all the same."

"Young fellow," said Andrews, looking steadily at the cripple, "it's time you were dropping your foolishness. I am not interfering with you in the least, and it is none of your business whether I go with this young lady or not. Do you understand?"

The cripple's thin lips parted in an evil-drawn smile.

"I mean what I say, young man."

The cripple smiled again and taking a knife from his pocket, opened a long, keen blade, looked up at Andrews and quietly remarked: "That's what a man 'lowed once when he met a wild cat in the country road, and he talked mighty earnest and he meant what he said, too, I reckon, but when he went away his shirt was badly tore and he found out

shortly afterwards that he had done left one of his ears hangin' on a bush."

"Miss Madam," said Andrews, turning to the girl, "it is not my desire to quarrel with a crippled boy, and rather than give him a chance to whine, I will surrender the pleasure of going with you."

Little Dave smiled again and put up his knife.

That night after supper, Bradshaw said that he had a job of work that all hands could help him perform. "We have been runnin' along in a push until we are about out of meal," said he, "and we must shell enough corn to-night to take to mill to-morrow; and might as well take several bags while we are at it."

The corn was brought to the house and was placed on a sheet spread on the floor. Andrews declared that he could beat Miss Madam shelling, and she laughingly accepted the challenge. Little Dave glanced at Andrews and, getting down on his knees, began work. After a time he looked up and said: "Have to take the wagon, I reckon."

"Of course," the old man answered.

"Who's goin'?"

"Why, you."

"I want Miss Madam to go, too."

"What's the use of her takin' all that jant?"

"Wall, then, I want Mr. Andrews to go."

"Gracious alive!" exclaimed Mrs. Bradshaw,

"has the boy gone daft? Why, I reckon he'll want the whole fam'ly to go next."

"Little Dave," said the old man, "what is the matter with you lately?"

"I ain't blind is the trouble, I reckon."

"You uster go to mill and not say a word about not wantin' to go by yo'self. You sholy ain't afraid of anything, are you?"

"Yes."

"What are you afraid of?"

"A thing that calls himself a man."

"Pap, I do believe he has gone daft, and I wouldn't like to trust the horses with him," said the old woman.

"Nonsense, 'Lizabuth, he's jest got one of his tantrums, and ding me if he shan't go if it takes all the hide off. I have been too kind to you, suh, to stand any of yo' foolishness, and I want you to get up when I call you and hitch up them horses. Do you hear?"

"Yes, suh, I hear."

"Wall, are you going to mind?"

"You've been too kind to me for me not to mind."

"All right, then; that settles it."

The cripple did not speak again that night, but in apparent unconcern of what passed about him, knelt on the sheet and shelled corn until the work

was done, and then getting up he gave Andrews a quick glance and ascended the stairway that led to his sleeping place.

Andrews heard them loading the corn long before daylight was sprinkled through the roof; he heard the dogs prancing in many a whining caper on the veranda; he heard the wagon roll away, and then he dozed with early morning stretchiness, and dreamed that he saw thin lips that bespoke many a night of lonely suffering, part in a cold and threatening smile. Old Bradshaw rapped on the stairway and cried that breakfast was ready, and Andrews sat up in bed and mused: "Why do I stay here? Would any other human being—but don't I stay because I *am* a human being?" He found the girl joyous when he went down stairs. She struck at him with a broom, and, darting away, defied him to catch her. The old man, who stood near, laughed at her frolicksomeness, but his manner changed a moment later when he saw the pale and despondent face of his wife.

"'Lizabuth, what's the matter?" he asked.

"Come to breakfast," she said.

"But what's the matter?" he repeated, following her as she turned toward the table on the veranda.

"You know what the matter is better than I can tell you. Sit down and help yo'self, Mr. Andrews."

"Shall I read you one of Spurgeon's sermons

after breakfast?" the guest asked, knowing that she was again in doubt as to the election of her soul.

"No, I am obleeged to you, for I hardly think it would do me any good. I reckon I was borned to be lost. The preacher said that thar was a certain number of souls to be saved and a certain number to be lost, and I don't think thar's any use for me to try."

"'Lizabuth," said the old man, "if thar was any such thing as a woman listenin' to reason, I could soon convince you that you are doing yo'self a great wrong by givin' away to these spells. You take everything the preacher says as law and gospel, when the truth is, he don't know any mo' about it than we do. He gits his knowledge from the Bible, and so do we; we can't find no other book to git that knowledge from, and nuther can he. If you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and still think that yo' soul is goin' to be lost, you must acknowledge that the whole plan of salvation is wrong and that Christ died in vain. Paul told the jailer to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and be baptized and he should be saved. You believe on Him and have been baptized. Now what stronger proof do you want? But you still cling to the idee that a certain number are to be saved and a certain number to be lost. Wall, let us say that a certain num-

ber *are* to be lost, and that the certain number are the ones that refuse to believe."

"Pap, I reckon you are right, but still I feel mighty bad."

"Of course you do, and it is mainly because yo' time for feelin' that way has come and you don't want to disapp'int yo'self by feelin' any other way."

"Now, pap," she whined, "you jest know that a body wants to feel as well as they can. But I do know that people have cause to think hard of me, and that makes me feel bad for one thing. I try my best, though, and still I can't get 'em nothin' fitten to eat when they come here."

"Madam," said Andrews, "it is now time for me to speak. So long as your fears are confined to your soul I am compelled to remain silent, but when you include your cookery, I must lift my voice in its defense, for, so far as I am concerned, there is not a hotel in the country that can prepare a meal as appetizingly as you do."

"But I jest know this chicken ain't fried right," she persisted, still feeling about for a basis of despondency.

"A saint that had served half his life in a kitchen couldn't fry it better," Andrews declared.

"That eased her mightily," the old man whispered, "but it won't be long till she fumbles around and finds something else to feel bad about."

During the forenoon Miss Madam and Andrews fished in a small stream not far away, but they were housed during the afternoon by a furious down-pour of rain. Evening came and still Little Dave had not returned. The old man would step to the door occasionally and gaze anxiously down the darkening road. "I am afraid," said he, "that Caney Fork has riz so that he can't git back. I hope he won't try, for if he does the horses will be drounded shure."

They sat up until late and then, convinced that the boy had put up somewhere for the night, went to bed. It seemed to Andrews that he had just fallen asleep when he was awakened by voices down stairs.

"You don't mean to say that you tried to git across the creek," the old man exclaimed.

"I did git across the creek."

"But whar are them hosses?"

"I din't try to drive 'em through. The creek was so high that I left them at Perdue's."

"How did you git across?"

"I swum."

"Is that how you bruised yo' face?"

"Yes, ag'in the drift wood and bresh."

"It is a thousand wonders you hadn't drounded. Why the deuce didn't you stay at Perdue's ruther than swim that creek and trudge all the way back here afoot?"

"'Cause I wanted to come home."

"Little Dave, it do look to me like you've lost about all the sense you ever had. Wall, as soon as you git breakfast in the mornin'—though I reckon you better wait a hour or so 'till the creek runs down—you git on old Joe and go right back after that wagon and team."

"Will Miss Madam go, too?"

"Look here, boy; what the devil is the matter with you?"

"Pap, oh, pap," the old woman called.

"Wall, what is it, 'Lizabuth?"

"You mustn't talk thater way."

"That's all right; you go to sleep. You oughter staid with the hosses, Little Dave, and you must go right back as soon as ever the creek runs down."

"Will Andrews go if Miss Madam don't?"

"What in the name of—go to bed. I don't want to hear another word out of you."

Little Dave did not sit down to breakfast with the family the next morning, and Andrews did not see him until the forenoon was well spent, when the boy, silent and with sudden pallor of countenance, mounted an old horse and started off down the road. The old man, humming a tune improvised by the bubbling kindness of his heart, went to his work of chopping sassafras sprouts from the corners of the fence; but his wife, still troubled over the possi-

ble condemnation of her soul, and fearful that her guest had not spoken from the heart when he complimented her ability to fry a chicken, sighed distressingly as she worked in the kitchen.

"Mother," said Miss Madam, "I do hope you ain't goin' to have another spell. Here of late you don't mo' than git out of one till you are into another."

"Don't talk to me about spells, child. You don't know what a spell is. It do seem to me like I git less and less happiness out of this life as the years roll on, and what will become of me after a while the Lord only knows."

"I think we've all got something to be happy for, mother. I never was as happy in my life as I am now, and it seems that I get happier and happier every day."

Supper was over long before Little Dave returned, and when he did come, he walked through the house without stopping, and, paying no attention to a remark addressed to him by Mrs. Bradshaw, went into the yard, looking about and listening as he walked with strange cautiousness. Suddenly he halted, and then turning, went toward the woods lot and stopped behind a tree. Andrews was sitting on a smooth log, where the cattle came to lick salt, and Miss Madam was standing near him. The moon was shining, and a small pond, which the ducks kept in a state of trouble all day, seemed to smile in thankfulness for an evening of rest.

"And do you think that you would continue to love me, no matter what might happen?" Andrews asked.

"Oh, nothin' could happen to change me. You must know that. You know that I ——"

"Come on all hands, it's bed time," old man Bradshaw shouted from the house.

The next morning when Bradshaw rapped on the stairway, there came no reply from above. He rapped again, louder than before, and then went up stairs. Andrews was not there, nor had the bed been occupied. The old man, with wonder and surprise pictured upon his face, went down stairs. Little Dave met him, and, with a peculiar smile, said:

"His hoss ain't in the stable."

"Is it possible that he is gone?"

"Who's gone?" Miss Madam excitedly asked.

"Andrews. His bed ain't been slept in, and Little Dave says his hoss is gone."

The girl ran up stairs—ran out to the stable—came drooping back and went to her room up under the clapboard roof.

"This do beat me," the old man declared.

"What's the matter?" Mrs. Bradshaw asked, coming from the kitchen.

"Andrews has run away."

"Mercy on me, how could he when we all thought so much of him. Look about and you mout find him some whar, pap."

"What would he be doin' round here when his hoss is gone? Don't be foolish, 'Lizabuth."

Little Dave went out to the field as if nothing had happened, and while the old man stood in the yard, looking across the cleared land, he saw the boy viciously strike the fence with his hoe. Miss Madam did not come down to dinner; she did not come down to supper.

"She is not well," Mrs. Bradshaw explained. The old man silently nodded his head.

Early the next morning two men rode up to the gate. The appearance of the men pronounced them strangers in that neighborhood. News might be expected.

"We are looking for a young fellow that we understand has been stopping here," said one of the men. "We are officers of the law from Louisville. The man Hitchpeth, who has been stopping with you, is——"

"No man by that name has been here," Bradshaw interrupted.

"That is his name, but you know him as Andrews. He is the defaulting cashier of a bank and we want him."

"He is gone," the old man said.

"When did he go?"

"Must have gone last night."

"Have you any idea which way he went?"

"No."

The men rode away and Miss Madam, who had run down stairs, dropped back to her hiding place. Late that evening, while the old man and Little Dave were feeding the horses, one of the officers came into the barn.

"Well, old man, we caught him; found him about fifteen miles from here pretty comfortably fixed in a farm-house. We don't want to go on any farther to-night, and would like to stop with you until morning."

"You can't stay," Bradshaw answered. "I don't want to see him ag'in."

"But can't we stay in that old cabin down in the hollow?"

"Don't care whar you stay so you don't bring him near me."

The weather was hot and the officers remained on the outside of the cabin, in which their prisoner was confined. The door, which opened outward, was securely propped with a log.

"I'd like to have a drink of water," one of the men remarked.

"Here, too. There's a spring right down yonder. Suppose you go to the house and get a cup."

"I don't care to, that old fellow is so cranky. Let's go down to the spring. The prisoner has been sound asleep for an hour; the door is propped all right, and he couldn't possibly get out before we get back."

They started off toward the spring. Little Dave, carrying a hatchet in his hand, stepped from behind a tree and approached the cabin. He hastily, and yet without a sound, climbed up one corner and crawled out on the roof. He made an opening by removing a number of clap-boards and then climbed down inside.

CHAPTER IV.

It was early morning. Miss Madam sat on the smooth log where the cattle came to lick salt. The ducks had just begun to trouble the water of the pond. The girl sat with her hands lying listlessly in her lap.

"Good mornin'."

She started, looked up and found Little Dave standing near her. He carried a handkerchief rolled into a small bundle.

"Go away, Little Dave; I don't want to see you."

"I won't go till I give you this present that somebody said give you."

He placed the rolled handkerchief in her lap.

"What is it?"

"Look and see."

She took up the bundle and unrolled it. "Mercy, what is this?" she cried, springing to her feet.

"His heart!" the cripple shrieked—and fled.

* * * * * * * *

The afternoon had come. Little Dave was gone. In the house, the old woman weighted down with the news of an awful tragedy, and crushed by the fear that her own soul was doomed to an endless torment, cried aloud in the hopeless voice of pitiable lamentation. The old man walked slowly in the orchard, with his hands held behind him. He saw Miss Madam on her knees under an apple tree, and going nearer, he saw her patting the earth about a little mound—he saw a bloody handkerchief on the ground not far away.

"What are you doin' here, my poor little angel?"

"I am buryin' a bird," she sobbed, without looking up.

* * * * * * * *

The months passed. One night when the rain was falling on the clapboard roof, the old woman lay helpless on her bed.

"Pap," she asked, "are you and Miss Madam here?"

"Yes, 'Lizabuth, here we are."

"Raise me up." He raised her and held her in his arms For a few moments she was quiet, and then she cried in a weak, though joyous voice. 'Oh,

mussyful God—oh, heavenly Saviour, now I know that I am elected."

* * * * * * * *

A journey-soiled man stopped at Bradshaw's to stay over night. He saw a sad old man and a girl whose face was sweet with the resignation that comes after deep suffering.

"And this is Bradley county," said the traveler. "The name reminds me of a circumstance that took place in Texas not long ago. I was herdin' cattle at the time, and among other cow-boys, hired a young feller that was sorter crippled. One day a mad steer knocked him off his horse and pinned him to the ground with his horns. I ran to him and he mumbled something, but all I understood was Bradley county, Kentucky—Little Dave."

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Under the apple tree where the girl had "buried a bird," there is another little mound—a baby's grave.

A BACKWOODS SUNDAY.

A SUNDAY in the backwoods of Tennessee, viewed by one whose feet rarely stray from the worn paths of active life, may hold nothing attractive, but to the old men and women—the youth and maiden of the soil—it is a poem that comes once a week to encourage young love with its soft sentiment and soothe old labor with its words of promise. In the country where the streams are so pure that they look like strips of sunshine, where the trees are so ancient that one almost stands in awe of them, where the moss, so old that it is gray, and hanging from the rocks in the ravine, looks like venerable beards growing on faces that have been hardened by years of trouble—in such a country, even the most slouching clown, walking as though stepping over clods when plowing where the ground breaks up hard, has in his untutored heart a love of poetry. He may not be able to read—may never have heard the name of a son of genius, but in the evening, when he stands on a purple "knob," watching the soul of day sink out of sight in a far-away valley, he is a poet.

When the shadow of Saturday night falls upon a backwoods community in Tennessee, a quiet joy seems to lurk in the atmosphere. The whippoorwill has sung unheeded every night during the week, but to-night his song brings a promise of rest. The tired boy sits in the door, and, taking off his shoes, strikes them against the log doorstep to knock the dirt out; and the cat that has followed the women when they went to milk the cows, comes and rubs against him. The hummingbird, looking for a late supper, buzzes among the huneysuckle blossoms, and the tree-toad cries in the locust tree. The boy goes to bed, thrilled with an expectation. He muses: "I will see somebody to-morrow."

On the morrow the woods are full of music. The great soul of day rises with a burst of glory, and the streams, bounding over the rocks or dreaming among the ferns, laugh more merrily and seem to be brighter than they were yesterday. Horses neigh near an old log church and a swelling hymn is borne away on the blossom-scented air. The plow-boy, sitting near the spring, heeds not the sacred music but gazes intently down the shady road. He sees some one coming—sees the fluttering of a gaudy ribbon and is thrilled. A young woman comes up the road, coyly tapping an old mare with a dogwood switch, and eager lest some

one else may perform the endearing office, he hastens to help the young woman to alight. He tries to appear unconcerned as he takes hold of the bridle rein, but he stumbles awkwardly as he leads the animal toward the horse-block. When he has helped her down and has tied the horse it is his blessed privilege to walk with the girl as far as the church door.

"What's Jim a-doin'?" he asks, as they walk along under the embarrassing gaze of a score of men.

"Plowed yistidy; ain't doin' nothin' to-day."

"Be here to-day, I reckon," he rejoins.

"He went to preachin' at Ebeneezer."

"What's Tom a-doin'?"

"Went to mill yistidy; ain't doin' nothin' to-day."

"Be here to-day, I reckon."

"He 'lowed he mout, but I don't know whether he will or not."

"What's Alf a-doin'?"

"Cut sprouts an' deadened trees yistidy; ain't doin' nothin' to-day."

"Be here to-day, I reckon."

"Yes, 'lowed he was a comin' with Sue Prior."

"Anybody goin' home with you, Liza?"

"Not that I know of."

"Wall, if nobody else ain't spoke I'd like to go."

"We'll see about it," she answers and then enters the church. He saunters off and sits down under a tree where a number of young men are wallowing on shawls spread on the grass. The preacher becomes warm in his work and the blow-boy hears him exclaim: "What can a man give in exchange for his own soul;" but he is not thinking of souls, or of an existence beyond the horizon of this life; his mind is on the girl with the gaudy ribbon and he is asking his heart if she loves him. The shadows are now shorter and hungry men cast glances at the sun, but the preacher, shouting in broken accents, appears not to have reached the first mile-stone of his text and it is evident that he started out with the intention of going a "Sabbath day's journey." One young fellow places his straw hat over his face and tries to sleep but some one tickles him with a spear of grass. An old man who has stood it as long as he could in the house and who has come out and lain down, gets up, stretches himself, brushes a clinging leaf off his gray jeans trousers and declares: "A bite to eat would hit me harder than a sermon writ on a rock. Don't see why a man wants to talk all day."

"Thought you was mighty fond of preachin', Uncle John," some one remarks.

"Am, but I don't want a man to go over an' over what he has already dun said. If my folks

want in thar I'd mosey off home an' git suthin' to eat."

"Good book says a man don't live by bread alone, Uncle John."

"Yas, but it don't say that he lives by preachin' alone, nuther. Hol' on; they are singin' the doxology now, an' I reckon she will soon be busted."

The plowboy goes home with his divinity—Uncle John's daughter. "Reckon Jim will be at home?" he asks as they ride along.

"He mout be. Air you awful anxious to see him?"

"Not so powerful. Jest 'lowed I'd ask. I know who's yo' sweetheart," he says after a pause.

"Bet you don't."

"Bet I do."

"Who is it then, Mr. Smarty?"

"Aleck Jones."

"Who, him? Think I'd have that freckled-face thing?"

"Wall, if he ain't I know who is."

"Bet you couldn't think of his name in a hundred years."

"You mout think I can't but I can."

"Wall, who, then, since you are so smart?"

"Morg Atcherson."

"Ho, I wouldn't speak to him if I was to meet him in the road."

"But you'd speak to some people if you was to meet them in the road, wouldn't you?"

"Yes, of course I would."

"Who would you speak to?"

"Oh, lots of folks. Did you see that bird almost hit me?" she suddenly exclaims.

"I reckon he 'lowed you was a flower."

"Oh, he didn't, no such of a thing. You ought to be ashamed of yo'se'f to make fun of me thater way."

"I wa'n't makin' fun of you. Ho, if I was ter ketch anybody makin' fun of you it wouldn't be good for him."

"What would you do?"

"I'd whale him."

"You air awful brave, ain't you?"

"Never mind whut I am; I know that if any man was to make fun of you he'd have me to whup."

A number of people have stopped at Uncle John's house. They sit in the large passageway running between the two sections of the log building and the men, who have not heard the sermon, discuss it with the women who were compelled to hear it from halting start to excited finish. The sun is blazing out in the fields and the June-bugs are buzzing in the yard. It is indeed a day of rest for the young and old, but is it a restful time for the housewife?

Does that woman, with flushed face, running from the kitchen to the dining-room and then to the spring-house for the crock jar of milk, appear to be resting? Do the young men and women that are lolling in the passage realize that they are making a slave of her? Probably not, for she assures them that it is not a bit of trouble, yet when night comes —when the company is gone—she sinks down, almost afraid to wish that Sunday might never come again, yet knowing that it is the day of her heavy bondage. Old labor has been soothed and young love has been encouraged, but her trials and anxieties have been more than doubled.

It is night and the boy sits in the door, taking off his shoes. To-morrow he must go into the hot field but he does not think of that. His soul is full of a buoyant love—buoyant for the girl with the gaudy ribbon has promised to be his wife.

THE HISTORY OF THE WATCH.

BROOMBERRY was on his way down town, intending to get off at the Van Buren street station. Just before reaching that point an acquaintance sat down beside him and began to talk about a murder that had been committed just a year before on the North Side. Being a city-hall man, Broomberry's acquaintance knew a great deal about the murder; he knew old Kloptock, the victim, and in an exceedingly discreet and sunken-voiced manner he intimated to Broomberry that he had a pretty shrewd idea as to who committed the deed. By this time the train had passed the Van Buren street station—was just pulling out, in fact, and Broomberry, determined not to miss an appointment, jumped off the train. He looked at his watch a minute later and found that in jumping off he had broken the crystal. He kept his appointment and then stepped into a jeweler's to get a new crystal.

"Where did you get it?" the jeweler asked when, after completing his work, he handed the watch to Broomberry.

"I got it from a friend of mine. Why?"

"Nothing, only you've got a rare watch, not in value but as to number. About thirty years ago a company of men built a factory at a little town called Romney, in Massachusetts, and began to manufacture watches; but, as some sort of disaster befell the concern, only three watches were ever completed, and this is one of them."

"You don't say so?" exclaimed Bloomberry. "Well, well; and I shouldn't have known of the rarity of my property if I hadn't broken the crystal in jumping off a train this morning. Do you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to trace this watch back to the factory if I can; and I'm going to write a description of the hands through which it has passed and make a book of it. Won't that be an odd little volume, 'The History of the Watch?' I am much obliged to you, sir. You've given me an idea, and to a man who is so unfortunate as to be compelled to make his living by thinking, an idea is almost a necessity. Ah, but pardon me for not answering your question. I got the watch from Henry Lucas: gave him $45 for it about two months ago. If the history should be interesting enough to print I'll give you a copy of it. Good-day."

Broomberry called on Henry Lucas. He found his friend absorbed in the work of "running up" figures in an immense book.

"Ah, Broomberry. Sit down."

"No; I haven't time. Say, where did you get this watch? Only three of them made and all that sort of thing. Just want to get the history of it, you know."

"I bought it from a fellow named Martin Kelly."

"Where do you suppose I can find him?"

"He works in the postoffice."

Broomberry went to the postoffice. He had struck a new line of work and was delighted. Mr. Kelly was easily found.

"I got it from Mark Hammonds," said he.

"The deuce you did." Broomberry exclaimed. "Why, he was the cause of my breaking the crystal this morning. I was talking to him and passed my station and then had to jump off. I'll go right down to the city hall and see him."

"Where did I get it?" Hammonds replied in a careless sort of a way. "Well, let me see. I got it from J. H. McPeal, a big furniture dealer on the West Side."

"All right; I'll go over there and see him."

The great furniture dealer, a smooth, well-fed, bald-headed man, was busy in his office when Broomberry entered.

"Well, sir, what can I do for you?"

"I came to ask you about this," said Broomberry, taking out the watch.

"Don't know anything about it, sir. Good-day."

"Excuse me," said Broomberry, "but my friend, Mark Hammonds, of the city hall, told me that he got it from you."

"Ah, let me see it. Yes, that's so," he added, when Broomberry had handed him the watch; and then, with an air of business, as though he had been rather lax with the ethics of trade and must now, as a recovery of principle, make a show of briskness, he asked: "But what about it, sir—what about it?"

"Nothing, only I should like to know where you got it."

"Yes, but I am very busy to-day—exceedingly busy, sir. Can't you call some other time?"

"Oh, of course; but it won't take a minute to tell me where you got it if you know."

"Yes, yes, that's so; but I'm extremely busy. Let me see. We took it in part payment on a lot of furniture—from, let me—Stevens," he called.

A man entered and said, "Yes, sir."

"What's the name of that boarding-house woman that couldn't, or rather wouldn't, pay for her furniture in money and we had to take a watch? What is her name? Quick; I'm busy."

"Mrs. Caddo, sir; 742 Limbill street."

"Yes, that's correct. Good-day, sir."

Broomberry hastened to the boarding-house of Mrs. Caddo. She would have talked an hour about the watch, or by it, either. She would have told of

the myriad of trials that come to the widowed keeper of a boarding-house, and she did tell of a certain harness-maker named Sam Haines, who had boarded with her, who was drunk nearly all the time, who positively refused, indeed, in a most insulting manner, to pay his board, but who, after being threatened by the law, and by a certain enormous policeman who knew the widow quite well, consented to give her his watch. This Mr. Sam Haines could be found in Madison street near Robey.

Broomberry found the harness-maker drunk and communicative. He got the watch of a certain pawnbroker and would neglect his work to go and show Broomberry the place.

"Oh, no. I can find it easily enough," said the visitor, taking down the number.

"But you can't find it as well as if I went with you," the accommodating harness-maker insisted. "You bet I'll go with you. Bet your life on that. You're my friend; bet your life on that."

Broomberry hastened away and heard something that sounded like "You go to h—l, then; bet your life on that," as he went out.

The pawnbroker remembered the watch, and, turning to his books, said that it had been sold to him by one H. J. Miles, 426 Rockland street.

Broomberry started out to look for the street and soon discovered that there was no such place. He returned to the pawn shop.

"The fellow that sold you this watch must have come by it dishonestly," he said to the broker.

"Very likely, sir. We have no means of finding out, you know. All we can do is to take the name and address, or what we suppose to be such."

"Yes, that's true, I suppose. But do you think you'd know the man if you were to see him again?"

"Yes. I think so."

"Have you ever seen him since he sold you the watch?"

"No, I think not."

"I have," said a boy standing at the back end of the place.

"Good; but do you know where he can be found?"

"I don't know where he stays, but I have seen him go up into a gambling house."

"Well, now, if you will go with me and point him out I will pay you well for your trouble."

Every day for four days the boy went with Broomberry and stood near a narrow stairway on Clark street, and just as they were about to leave the place on the evening of the fourth day the boy clutched Broomberry's arm and said:

"That's him going up now."

"All right. Here." He gave the boy $5.

Broomberry went up into the gambling den; he closely studied the man that had been pointed out. The fellow lost his money and went down. Broom-

berry followed him. He went to a sort of hotel in Canal street and Broomberry kept him in view. He went into the barroom and sat down at a table. Broomberry approached him, indiscreetly, too, and said:

"Will you please pardon me if I ask you a few questions?"

"I don't know whether I will or not," the fellow growled, but Broomberry, taking no notice of his ill-humor, sat down.

"I am about to write a little history," said he, "and think you may be able to help me out on it. I have in my possession a watch which I have traced to you, and I should like to know where you—"

The fellow jumped up, knocked Broomberry down and disappeared through a back door. When the historian got up and brushed himself he was told that a policeman had caught the fellow—a singular outcome, surely. The fellow was brought back and then, together with Broomberry, was taken to a police station, where the historian related his story, and then there came a sensation. The watch had belonged to old Kloptock and Broomberry had found the murderer.

OLD LUXTON'S WOLF.

"DON'T tell me that the thoroughly good fellow ever can become a financial success," said Luxton, the old printer. "Well, wait a minute," he quickly added, seeing that one of company was about to dispute him. "I admit that there are exceptional cases, cases where accident or sudden turn of fortune, depending not in the least upon that trickery which we too often term business skill, have played no part; but you take ten eminently successful men and I'll warrant that in nine of them can be found a prepondering element of that quality known as wolf essence. Oh, I know. Selfishness, extreme, unyielding selfishness, is the essential oil of success. Let me give you an illustration: In Nashville, Tenn., I set type beside a most genial fellow named Abe Carson. Every instinct seemed to be that of a true gentleman, and surely no one had a tenderer heart. He held himself in a gentle readiness to perform kind offices; he carried encouraging cheerfulness into the sick room; he and harshness were unknown to each other. One night I noticed that a strange sadness had settled upon him, and I

questioned him, but he answered evasively. The next night he appeared to be in deeper gloom, but on the third night a peculiar change took place. I happened to be looking at him when the darkness suddenly fell from his face like a fog lifted from the surface of a pool, but unlike a pool thus suddenly cleared, I saw no pleasant countenance seeming to rejoice freedom—I saw a face bright enough, but hard; eyes light enough, but cold.

"'What's the matter, Abe?' I could not help but ask. He turned, looked steadily at me for a moment and then said:

"'Luxton, we have always been friends?'

"'Yes.'

"'But I don't think we shall be much longer.'

"'Why?' I asked with the quick impulse of astonishment.

"'Oh, I've undergone a change. You know that I have been what people are pleased to call a good fellow.'

"'Yes.'

"'Well, you won't hear them say it much longer. When a man becomes known as a good fellow the roadway that leads to success is closed to him. When favors are to be distributed they are given to other people. You know that I am one of the most capable compositors in the city, yet I have worked for ten years in this office and have seen incompetent

man after incompetent man placed above me as foreman. It has seemed to me that so soon as a man made himself thoroughly disliked he was in line for promotion. I have been a gentleman about as long as I can afford to be, and I am going to make myself available for the foremanship of the office. Hereafter you must place no confidence in me; I am a wolf.'

"Within a week from that time I discovered that Abe Carson was as despisable a man as I had ever seen. He was surly and selfish; he fawned upon those above him in authority, but treated his equals with contempt.

"Within two months he was foreman of the office, and I, his old friend, finding it difficult to work for so exacting a master, sought employment elsewhere, but I kept track of him. Within three years he owned a printing office, and shortly afterward he was made independent by securing the state printing. Everybody said he was a wolf, and consequently he had more work than he could do. I met him in the street one day, and to test him to see if any of his old-time friendship for me were alive under the appearance of the death of all feeling, I asked him to lend me five dollars.

"'I'm not in the money lending business,' said he, looking at me in dark disapproval. 'You haven't noticed three balls hanging in front of my door, have you?'

"'No, but as I have often accommodated you in the past I don't see why you shouldn't contribute to the relief of my present necessities.'

"'That's all right; but I haven't any money to lend. Nowhere,' he quickly added, fancying doubtless that he discovered the intention of a coming protest; 'of course you need it or you wouldn't want to borrow, but suppose that every man who does need it could borrow? Hah? What do you suppose would be the condition of the business world? Hah?'

"Then I told him that I was merely experimenting with him, that I didn't need any money. He didn't seem at all pleased. 'I told you some time ago that I was a wolf,' said he, 'but you were determined to open my mouth and look at my teeth, eh? Well, you saw them.'

"I took one other occasion to speak to Carson and that came about in this way: A man came to me and begged me to see Carson at once and persuade him to reconsider an action taken that morning. 'I was foreman of the book room,' said the man, 'and Carson fired me out because a few reams of paper were spoiled in the cutting. I urged that I would pay for the loss, but in a most cold-blooded way he made me get out of the office. I don't know what I am to do, work is dull, and I've a large family.'

"I went to see Carson. 'No, sir,' said he, 'the fellow ruined a lot of paper and ought to be taught a lesson.'

"'But he says he will pay for it.'

"'Yes, I know; but it's my duty to teach him a lesson;' and here he smiled so maliciously that I felt a strong impulse to hit him in the mouth. 'He is competent and all that, but he must go. Say, is it possible you can't learn anything? Didn't I tell you that I am a wolf? Hah? And didn't I give you sufficient proof?'

"'I accept your proof,' I replied, and indignantly marched out. Well, years passed, and about five months ago I got a letter from Carson. 'My dear old friend,' said he, 'it is with joy that I tell you I am no longer a wolf. It was never my nature to be, but my success in life demanded it. And now that I have built up a fortune, I have returned to my old self and henceforth will be a good fellow—a gentleman.'

"You can well imagine my emotions upon receiving this letter. Carson, the long estranged, to be a good fellow again. I would go to see him; and I set the fifth of the month as the day when I should set out on my journey of pleasure, a journey that should take me back not to the state printer, but to Abe Carson, the gentlest man I ever knew. But I didn't go."

"Why?" some one asked.

"Because I saw on the fourth that Carson had failed, having been forced to the wall by a note

which he had signed for a friend, and that in his dejection he had killed himself."

"Luxton," said an old fellow, taking out a quid of tobacco and striking the spittoon with a spat, "I have knocked about a good bit and have met quite a number of men, first and last, and just at this time it strikes me that you are the biggest liar I ever saw."

SHELLING PEASE.

An old negro, with troubled thought embossed on his countenance, was seen standing on the bank of a river. Certain gestures, implying helplessness, and the peculiar tone of his mutterings proclaiming despair, might have led one, unacquainted with negro character, to suppose that the old fellow was about to destroy himself; but the persons who were near knew that a black negro never kills himself purposely, and they were, therefore, unmoved.

After a while the old negro took out a silver dollar, looked at it a moment, and then threw it into the river.

"Look here, what did you do then?" a man asked.

"I flung a dollar in dis yere river, sah."

"And you're the biggest fool I ever saw."

"Mebbe I ain't ez big er fool ez you think I is; mebbe I had er aim in flingin' dat money er way."

"Aim in throwin' it away! Was it that you've got too much, and want to get rid of it?"

"No, bless yo' life it ain't. De Lawd knows dat der ain't er man in dis yere 'munity dat needs money more'n I does."

"Ah, and you threw that dollar away because you thought it would bring you good luck, eh?"

"No, sah, caze I doan' bleve in no sich er 'stition ez dat."

"Well, why did you throw your dollar away?"

"My son," said the old man, "you ain't ez much o' er floserfer ez I is, an' darfo you doan know de tricks dat sarve ter turn way de troubles o' dis yere life. Lemme tell you suthin: Some time de mine kin worry so long ober de same thing dat er pusson will go crazy ef he doan make his mine change de subject. Now, dat's 'stablished an' granted, an' we'll git down ter de p'int. Er few weeks ergo I got 'quainted wid er lady dat mighty nigh tuck my bref. You may think dat er little mouf black bass an' one deze yer speckeled pearches is putty, but da'd no mo' compar wid dat piece o' human flesh den er mud turkle would show up wid er pea fowl. Soon ez I seed her, does you know whut I done? I drapped right inter pure love. My ole wife had dun been run er way wid dat yaller barber mo'n er year, an' I knowed dat I wuz fitten ter marry, 'cordin' ter de church an' 'spectable s'ciety, so I put out arter de lady, I did. I went ter see her er good many times; I tuck her hoss apples tied up in er red hankerchuck; I yered dat she smoked, an' I fotch her some yaller leaf terbacker dat I raised myse'f; I made mer-

lasses candy fur her; I eben went so fur ez ter steal er chickin an' fry it an' take it ter her; an' now I wanter ax you ef er pusson could do much mo' den all dis? She could see by all deze yere 'tentions dat I wuz ready an' er waitin' ter lay down my life fur her. But did she smile at me in return fur all dis? Did she take holt o' my han' like she oughter done, an' say, 'Simon, lead de way an' I'll foller you through dis yere life.' Did she do dat? No, sah, but I'll tell you what she done. W'en I called at de house de las' time she wuz settin' in de do' shellin' pease. Sez I, 'Howdy do, ma'm,' an' I set down on de step an' tuck up er pea hull and gunter look at it like dar wuz suthin' cu'is er bout it. She says:

"'Good mawnin', sah.'

"''Taint quite ez dry ez it was er few days er go,' says I.

"'No, an' it ain't quite ez wet ez it wuz while it wuz rainin'.'

"She sorter cut her eye up at me an' I smiled, but she shut off de light dat fell on me by lookin' some whar else.

"'Whut's de reason I didn't see you at church yeste'd'y?' I asked.

"'I reckon it wuz becaze I didn't go.'

"She flung some more light on me and went on shellin' pease.

"'Bruder Jasper 'lowed dat he missed you might'ly,' I 'lowed.

"'Who, dat ole fool?'

"'An' I missed you might'ly, too.'

"'Who, you?' She stobbed me wid er dirk o' light on' kep' on er shellin'.

"'Yas,' says I, 'an' ef I wuz ter be snatched frum dis worl' an' tuck ter heaben an' didn' find you dar I'd be so diserpinted dat I'd say 'take me 'way frum yere.''

"'Indeed,' she said, an' she sorter wrinkled her nose, but she didn't look at me er tall.

"'Yas, honey, an' I'd not only tell 'em to take me er way, but ef da didn' do it I'd jump out'n dar like er steer.'

"'Who you callin' honey?' she axed.

"'Who's yere wid me?'

"'I is!'

"'Den I'se callin' you honey.'

"'Fool,' she says.

"'Who's you callin' fool?'

"'Who's yere wid me?'

"'I is,' says I.

"'Den I'se callin' you fool.'

"'Fool is er mighty po' swap fur honey," says I.

"'I doan know 'bout dat, but I knows dis: dat ef I had er yeller dog dat wuz flea-bit, an' had de mange, I wouldn't swap him fur you.'

"'Miss,' says I, gittin' up offen de step, 'dar ain't nobody dat likes de flowers and runnin' vines o' speech better den I does, but I wanter tell you dat you'se gittin' sorter pussonal; but hole on—doan go inter argyment on dis p'int, fur I wanter state er case ter yer. Naw lissun ter me: I'se got about ten hogs—one o' 'em ain't right well, but he'll git all right—an' two cows an' er hoss, 'sides er whole lot o' stuff in the house. Naw I offers dis ter you wid de undyin' love o' er man dat kin stan' flat-footed an' shoulder fo' bushels of wheat. You'se yeared er ca'f lowin' arter his mammy. Dat ain't nuttin' ter de way my heart lows arter you. I want you, honey; I want you, an' I wan't you right now.'

"I waited an' waited fur her ter say suthin', but she kept on er shellin'.

"'An' I want you right now,' says I. 'I mout look ter you like I'm old; but, honey, I'se only ole in de wisdom o' de world. I'se been er 'round, honey. I used ter be er deck han' on er steamboat, an' I'se been up ter Cairo an' way down ter Fryer's P'int; an' now I fetches all dis wisdom ter you an' tells you dat I wants you, an' wants you right now. What mo' kin er lady ax den dis? Kin she lissen an' harken ter de chatter o' deze yere young bucks arter all dis? Now, whut does you say?'

"She looked at me, she did, an' says: 'You say

you ain't ole, but I bet you kain't jump dat fence dar.'

"'I'll bet I kin,' says I.

"'Den I'll bet you dat you kain't stay on de udder side.'

"I looked at her—I looked at her hard dis time, an' I says, 'Lady, you'se boxin' me fust one side an' den de udder gest fur yo' own pleasure. I'se too proud er man ter stand dat; I'se traveled too much ter stand it; an' now I'se gwine stan' right yere an' ax you ef you gwine be my wife.'

"'Ole man,' say she, but she didn't turn de light on me—she give me cold darkness—'ole man, hobble er long now. I ain't got no crutches fur you, so hobble er long while you'se able. W'en I wants ter marry sich er man ez you, I'll go ober yander ter de guberment hospital an' pick him out.'

"Den I come er way. Laws er massy, de misery I did see night after night! Ever' time I'd shut my eyes dar wuz dat lady, shellin' pease. I prayed ter de Lawd ter send me de angel o' peace, an' I drapped off ter sleep, an' yere come de angel. She had er long silver cloak on, an' er gold veil; an' jest ez I drapped on my knees ter thank her fur de peace she had fetch me, she tuck er pan full o' pease out frum under her silver cloak, an' she lifted her golden veil, an' I seed de cruil lady dat I loved.

"At last I found dat if I didn't take my mind offen dat subject I'd go crazy, an' darfo' I come down yere and flung er dollar in de river."

"But how will that aid you to take your mind off the subject?"

"Oh Lawd, you'se got er heap ter l'arn an' er mighty heap o' traveling to do. How is it gwine take my mine offen de subject? Dis way: I'll go away from yere thinkin' o' whut er fool I wuz ter fling er way dat dollar w'en I needed it so much; an' all de time I'se thinkin' 'bout de dollar, my mine will be at rest consarnin' de lady settin' in de do' shellin' pease."

A YOUNG MAN'S ADVICE.

THE editor of the weekly *Household Comfort* was sitting in his office looking over a pink sketch entitled "How to Make Home a Paradise of Love," presumably written by a maiden lady, when the footsteps of quick impulse were heard in the hallway. A thump, with uncalculated force, resounded from the door, and when the editor cried "Come in," there entered a tall, muscular young man.

"Is this Ruben J. Stibbens?" the visitor asked.

"The same sir, and I am at your service. Sit down."

"I hope you are," said the visitor, as he seated himself. He remained silent for a few moments and then, giving his hat a sort of determined shove back, remarked:

"I have been reading your paper for some time."

"Yes," the editor interrupted with a "property" smile.

"I first took it up about a year ago," the visitor went on, "and at once became interested in your advice to young men. You said that a young man

with an income of $20 a week could not only afford to get married, but that if anything he could live cheaper and, therefore, save more money than ever before."

"Yes?"

"I was visiting a young lady at that time and decided that I was in love with her. I believed that she would make me a good wife, but had been holding off through fear that I could not afford to marry; but you pictured it so attractively and figured it out with such encouragement that I knew that I couldn't make a mistake by following your advice. I was boarding at a very nice place, where there was a gay company and much entertaining talk, and when we all assembled at table, I fancied, and not without cause, that I was the king bee of the hive. And I pictured to myself the man I'd become when I should sit at my own table."

"Yes," said the editor.

"But," the visitor continued, "I held off through fear that I might possibly make a mistake. I was so free that I couldn't exactly see how I could better myself, but I knew that you, as a man of experience, must surely be right. I laid the matter before my girl and she laughed at my questioning; the result. She had been doubtful at first, she said, but your paper had tipped with gold the sharp horn of every fear. Those were her very words.

She reads a good many flimsy books. 'We can just live the nicest you ever saw,' she said. 'We will rent a furnished flat and—oh, won't that be charming?' and that's the way she went on. I think she had a notion of going on the stage at one time."

The editor said "yes," and the young man, after a short silence, thus went on:

"I held off a little while longer, but here came another copy of your paper and with a strong array of facts settled the matter. Well, we were married. We rented a furnished flat and then our trouble began. Our friends fell away from us, and when I took my wife to visit my companions at the boarding house—I waived aside all formality and took her there—I soon discovered that I had lost caste; but I loved my wife and looked with contempt upon the littleness of my former associates. One evening I didn't go home until rather late, and my wife complained about it. She shed tears and I thought with a pang of the freedom I had lost. I would take my salary home every Saturday night and give it to my wife, which was right enough as she was of a more saving nature than myself. One Saturday evening I went home after having met several old time friends from my boyhood town. When I handed over my money my wife counted it, and then, looking hard at me, said: '$2 short.' I

explained that I had met several old friends. 'But I don't meet any,' she replied. Then she cried, and I thought of my former ownership of my own money and silently cursed myself."

"I am sorry," said the editor.

The visitor grunted and then continued: "Well, it has just been a year since I married and what do I find? I find that my expenses are nearly twice as heavy as they were—I find that I must either bend to the whims of a woman or bear the appearance of a brute."

"I regret very much that you should have been disappointed," said the editor, "but you should console yourself with the time honored thought that it might have been worse."

"Yes," replied the visitor, "I might have married sooner; but I have come here not to be told that matters might have been worse, but to ask your candid advice. You were the cause of my marriage, and now let your mind work for a few moments in my behalf; but first view the difficulties of the situation. If I surrender completely my wife will forever rule me; if I insist upon being master I shall be set down as a tyrant. What would you do?"

"Well," said the editor, after a few moments' reflection, "I should think that some appeasing medium could be struck. Get up a sort of treaty, as it were."

"Now look here," the visitor said, rather sharply, "you ought to know that a woman don't keep a treaty. When it comes to a matter of treaty she is a barbaric nation."

"My dear sir, I don't know what to advise."

"But what did you do? You surely had to solve certain household problems after you married. Give me your experience."

"My dear sir," said the editor, smiling, "I would willingly give you my experience as to the regulation of married life, but the truth is, I am not a married man."

"What!" exclaimed the visitor, springing to his feet, "do you mean to tell me——"

"I mean to tell you," the editor broke in, "that I never married."

"Would you rather take off your coat?" the young married man asked in a strangely soft voice.

"Take off my coat! What do you mean?"

"I mean that I'm going to lick you and that I will give you the privilege of removing superfluous garments." The visitor took off his coat and stood waiting for the editor. "Come, hurry up. I haven't time to wait on you. I've got to get home in time to keep from being taken to task. Get up here."

"My dear sir," expostulated the editor, getting

up and stepping back, "you are a most peculiar man. That advice was not written especially for you."

"But it caught me especially. Come here!"

He reached after the editor and caught him, too. He caught him with a hip hold and slammed him on the unsympathetic floor. He took hold of the editor's convenient ears and bumped his head, bumped it until some one on the floor below yelled, "Here, here, let up with that bowling alley business." He pulled a wisp of hair out of the editor's head, the very wisp that, brushed carefully back, had served to hide a bald spot; he choked him to apparent insensibility, and after pouring a quart of violet ink over his well-done work, took his departure.

The latest number of *Household Comfort* does not tell how two people can live more cheaply than one, but in it there is an article entitled "Marriage Sorter Shaky if Not a Complete Failure."

THE PROFESSOR.

SOME men acquire titles, but the professor's title was thrust upon him. Nor did he object. In truth it was an unpropitious day when he objected to anything. About all he seemed to care for was to sit in the saloon and play the piano for the drinks that bar-room courtesy shoved his way. The professor was getting along in years; he had no family. He had no ambition, and I don't know but that it was well for him that he hadn't, for ambition in the breast of the weak is a sore rankler. The professor's master performance was of a piece called the "Battle of Gettysburg." Jim, the big bartender, wouldn't let him play it except on Saturday evenings. Jim knew that the children of genius are cheapened by frequent parade, and so he kept the "battle" for the week's banner night.

One day a distressing accident befell the professor. He was caught some way—of course he didn't choose how—in a swinging bridge and both hands were mashed into a sickening pulp. They took him to a hospital and when the surgeons got through with

him it was plain that his professorship was about over. This was a worry which from the first moment of the accident had lain on his mind. The next day he sent for the hospital physician and said to him:

"Say, doc, of course I don't know how badly I'm whittled up, only I'm willing to bet it's bad enough, and I'd like for you to tell me if you think my usefulness in life is knocked out."

"What is your business?"

"Business! My dear sir, I have never been compelled to make my living in trade."

"Well, what do you do?"

"I'm a professor of music in the Hole in Ground conservatory—in other words, I play a piano in a saloon."

"Well," said the physician, looking at him compassionately, "you have one finger on the right hand and two on the left."

"Good-bye then to my sovereignty," said the professor.

"It's bad, but can't you make a living some other way—by teaching music?"

"No, I couldn't teach music; don't know anything about it as a science or an art. I picked it up by accident; I found it as a sort of 'sleeper', and I saw that I could get drinks with it."

"But I should think that you could earn your living some how. You appear to be a man of education."

"Why, don't you know," said the professor, "that in the majority of cases it's the educated man who finds it hardest to make an honest living; the man who has a trained mind—say, I'm a trifle too sober; soberer than I've been for years, and I want you to help me out of it. Now, here, don't preach any moral doctrine to me. There are no seeds of reformation in me. All I want is enough whiskey to dull certain sharp places. Now, look here; I see that you're going to preach to me; you're going to tell me about the duty I owe to myself and my friends. And just let me hold you off by saying that I don't owe myself any duty, and I recognize nothing as friendship except 'take something with me!' Depraved! Of course. What do you expect of a man who plays a piano in a saloon? Sprigs of morality? Hah?"

The doctor brought a glass of whiskey and gave it to the professor.

"You've hit it now. Just hold it up, please. Thank you," he said, when the doctor took the glass away.

"You must have a history," the physician remarked.

"I have—Hume's, in six volumes."

"Oh, I mean a personal history."

"I hadn't thought of that, but I may have."

"Where were you born?"

"Either in this country or some other, I'm quite sure."

"What is your name?"

"The professor."

"I'd like very much to know something about you."

"Yes? Well, it wouldn't do you any good. Say, did it ever strike you that old drunkards take a mournful delight in parading their depravity and the opportunities they have lost? A man is often contented with his misery and proud of his disgrace. Probably I could tell you a long story of a false wife and a ruined home; probably I could tell you of a defalcation and a midnight flight from a quiet New England village. But I won't. And why? Because such things don't concern my case in the least. Did I drink all that liquor when you tilted that glass? I did? Well, it's time for more, isn't it? No? Say, you people that give a man a swig of whiskey and tell him he's got enough put yourselves in contempt of court. Why should you presume to tell a man that he's got enough? You may tell me that you won't give me any more, and you may call me most any sort of name, for that is a privilege that I grant any man; but don't tell me that I've got enough when every fiber of my body tells me that I haven't."

"I didn't tell you that you've had enough."

"Didn't you? Look here, I am discovering some very gentlemanly traits in you; and if I weren't in this fix I'd shake hands with you. But what about the whiskey?"

"You can't have any more at present."

"There, you fell down. 'Tis thus throughout life: A man wins our confidence and then wilfully throws it away."

The professor took an exceeding thirst with him when he went back to the saloon, and during a week the whiskey was almost of incessant flow, but after awhile big Jim called the professor aside and thus spoke to him:

"Say, professor, you know we all like you and all that sort of thing, but you know things have sorter changed. You used to earn your liquor by piano playing but you can't play any more and some of the customers are kicking about your setting around here always watching for a drink. Of course I don't wan't to hurt your feelings, but I've got to stand by the customers or this thing will go by the board, you know; so I'd rather you'd stay away from here, professor. No harm, sure, understand, and recollect I wouldn't hurt your feelings for anything, but it's got to be this way. Now, if you could do something to entertain the customers of course you could have drinks and lunch, but—"

"Oh, I can entertain them," said the professor. "I can dance."

"But that won't be much of an entertainment."

"What! Now, Jimmy, don't you go round here showing your ignorance. Why, don't you know that dancing is about to drive piano playing out of society? You go to the biggest piano house in town and they'll tell you that their sales have dropped off at least fifty per cent. in the last six months; and you go to a leading shoe store and ask them how dancing shoes are going. Don't prove your unfitness for your position, Jimmy, by making such breaks as that."

"All right, professor; I'll give it out that you are to dance after this."

And he did dance; not so well as some people have danced in the past and not as well as some people are likely to dance in the future, but he danced back some of his lost popularity. So old a man capering for the amusement of a crowd was grotesque, but grotesque catches the rabble, and in a saloon old age itself becomes ridiculous.

Another accident befell the professor. A street car mashed his foot. After a time he limped back to the saloon and the "boys" greeted him with a shout and gave him whiskey, but after a day or two Jim came to him and said:

"They are complainin, again, professor."

"They don't want me, eh?"

"That's it."

"I'll entertain them with stories."

"They've heard all your chestnuts."

"I'll sing for them."

"Oh, Lord."

"What don't you think I can sing?"

"I know you can't."

"Well, to tell the truth, Jimmy, I reckon I am a little short on singing. And I've got to go, eh?"

"Yes."

"You've got everything out of me; you've squeezed me dry and now you're going to throw me out. But that's the way with you saloon fellows; and I actually believe that if the best fellow in the world should keep a saloon a few years he would put out his father after he ceased to be a source of revenue. I don't know where I'll hang out, but of course that doesn't make any difference."

He limped away and more than a week passed before he was seen again in the saloon. Then he came in when Charley, the other bartender, was on watch.

"How are you, Charley?"

"Hello, professor, take something?"

"Will I? Just watch me. Fill it clear up."

"Say," said Charley, when the professor had taken his drink, "you'd better get away before Jim comes on. He'll bounce you."

"Yes, I will, but I've got to lie down a minute. I feel all burnt out. I'll go back here and lie down, but I'll git out before Jim comes on."

"I'd rather you wouldn't, professor."

"Oh, I'll be all right in a few minutes."

He lay down and Charley took all the bottles and put them on the bar and began to clean up. He put the bottles back and began to wait on early customers, and he forgot the professor. After awhile Jim came in, and the first thing he saw was the professor lying back there.

"You'll have to get out of this," he said, walking back. "I say, professor," touching him with his toe. "Heigh, here, professor." And suddenly Jim sprang back with horror in his face.

"Charley," he said, "call a patrol wagon."

Yes, the professor was all right in a few minutes.

OLD BROTHERS.

OLD BLIND BOB is a well-known figure in the streets of Chicago. He came to this city years ago, having run away from his Kentucky home of bondage. He had fought dogs, he said, on an island in the Ohio river, and he used to bare his arms and show the children where the fierce animals had torn his flesh. He was ever known as a kind-hearted man, and when a dangerous duty presented itself he faced it with cheerful fearlessness. One night an old tenement house on Lake street caught fire and when the flames shot high in the air, the cry was raised that a crippled man had been left in an upper front room. Bob did not wait a moment after hearing the cry; he bounded up the burning stairway and brought the crippled man down with him, but left his eyesight behind. For a time he was a hero. The newspapers "wrote him up" and people flocked to see him as he lay in his room. A subscription was opened and a sum of money, not large but promising to be larger, was raised for him, but apathy, the sure follower of enthusiasm, soon came

and Bob was no longer a hero, but an unfortunate negro that lost his eyesight in a fire.

The old man, led about by a large brindle dog, lived on charity. His voice, with mendicity's earliest trick, became peculiarly soft and persuasive, and it was declared that the dog had cultivated the knack of throwing tender appeal into his anxious look.

The growth of the city gradually drove the old man southward. Young men remember when he lived on Madison street in a closet under a stairway, and the newsboys have seen him move three times within the past three years and now his wretched lodging place is in a cellar just off Van Buren street.

I have talked many times with the old man. Indeed I held a strong interest for him, not that I could say anything that might tend to brighten his future, but that I held in common with him a certain memory of the past—I had lived near his old home in Kentucky.

"Ef I could git my eyes back ergin," he once remarked, "does you know what I'd do? Hah, does you know? Doan reckon you does. You reckons dat I'd stomp round yere an' look at deze yer high houses dat I yere folks talk so much erbout, but I lay I wouldn't. I'd go right off down yander in Kaintucky an' look at dat spring branch whar I used

ter wade. Recolleck dat big oak tree whar de Mount Hope road crossed de Bardstown pike? Wall, sah, right under dat tree I killed de bigges' black snake one day I eber seed in my life; an' de triflin' raskil fit me, too, he did. Yaller Tony wuz wid me an' bless yo' life how dat boy did run; an' I tuck de snake and hung him on de fence ter make it rain, an' now you neenter laugh but it did make it rain sho's you bo'n. Mars' Wiley—dat wuz ole marster—he 'lowed dat it did make it rain, but he tole me not ter tell de uder white folks dat he bleved it caze da'd laugh at him. An' you say Yaller Tony is er preacher now? Wall, wall. Sorter strange dat er boy dat wuz er feerd o' er snake would turn out ter be er man ter fight Satan, but den I reckon ef Eve had been er little skeerder o' er snake it would 'a' been er good 'eal better fur us all."

Several days ago, late in the afternoon, I was passing Old Bob's cellar, when I heard him talking louder and harsher than I had ever known him to talk before, and stepping down into the den I saw the old man sitting with his back against the wall, frowning upon his old brindle dog.

"What's the matter, Uncle Bob?" I asked.

"Oh, is dat you? Er good 'eal de matter, sah. Dis ole raskil dun lead me whar I almos' cripple myse'f ergin er pile o' bricks. He's gittin' tired o' me, too, de ole scoundul."

The dog whined piteously.

"Oh, you's sorry now, is you? You ain't ha'f ez sorry ez I is, you good fur nothin' houn'. Come er lookin' roun' atter udder dogs an' let me breck my ole bones. Git away from me"—the dog was trying to rub his head against him—"git er way, caze I doan wanter had nuthin' ter do wid er traitor. Oh, you mer whine but I ain't neber gwine be yo' frien' no mo'."

The dog turned toward me. I shall never forget the scene. The old guide—the safe conduct through so many years—was blind.

"Uncle Bob," said I, "the poor old dog is now in closer kindship with you—he is blind."

The old man sobbed, and feeling about him—feeling for the dog—said:

"Come yere, my po' ole frien' an' bruder; come yere. Dar now, doan cry an' whine. Did you think I wuz mad at you? Bless yo' life, I wouldn't scold you. Dar, dat's it. Lay down, now; lay down."

OLD JOHN.

THE following must have been written as a most secret self-confession. The stress of much importance was evidently laid upon it, judging from the care with which it was hidden away under a rock. It was found in a small box, and was wrapped in a piece of oil-skin. I would not so rudely drag the writer's secret into the blistering domain of print, were it not that a moral—I don't exactly know what sort—trickles down among its words like a rivulet from a dripping spring.

I must have been born a scoundrel (thus the confession begins), for I cannot throw my recollection back to a time before the fly of dishonesty had laid an egg in my soul. I have no doubt that my first meditated utterance was a lie, and I am inclined to the belief that my first noteworthy performance was a theft. How I kept out of the penitentiary when I had grown up, is a mystery to me, as I now look back upon those years of eager rascality, but I did keep out, and more, I managed to gain the confidence of many people who thought

themselves world-wise. How complete a scoundrel a man may be, and yet hold the admiration of honest women. In talking to them I skirted the edge of a forbidden ground, and they, ever fascinated by a glimpse of the danger line, declared me witty and wise, and voted dullness to certain honest men, who talked with good intention. I did not marry early; I did not find a rich woman who happened to be at matrimonial leisure. I lived along, often denounced by men, but more often pitied by women. I must have been nearly thirty years old when I met John Lagmuth. I was fishing in a small Wisconsin lake one Saturday, and on a nervous sudden my boat tipped over, and into the lake I went. The water was not very deep, and I walked ashore, and was standing in the sunshine to dry, when I saw a man coming toward me.

"Won't you have a nip?" he asked as he came nearer.

"No, I believe not," I answered.

"You'd better—you might take cold. Got some pretty fair brandy here."

He handed me a flask and I took a drink, and that was the beginning of our acquaintance. I didn't think so much of him at first; I saw at once that there was something about him that did not, so far as I knew, belong to any other man, but this did not give me special concern. There was noth-

ing within me that called for friendship; I did not feel that my nature could agree to a scheme of reciprocity, and therefore I was surprised when I found that I was really attached to John Lagmuth. And then a peculiar sadness settled upon me; I was depressed by the thought that he might soon discover my unworthiness of his regard. Never before had I known an unrest to arise from such a cause. Once I had been half way in love with a slip of a pale creature who had drawn about her thin being the catchy drapery of a romantic air, but not for a moment had I been concerned lest she might discover me to be a rascal.

John Lagmuth liked me. I could see that and I felt a strange consolation in the attention which he showed me, and I said to myself that I would be so skillful that he should never see any deeper into my nature than I was willing that he should look.

One day he came to me said: "Harvey, let us room together." And then, before I could answer, he added: "You look surprised."

"Surprised with pleasure if at all," I replied.

"Good!" he said, with loud heartiness, placing his hand on my shoulder. "And why do I say good?" he asked, giving me more sympathy with his eyes than the words of any one else had ever conveyed. "Because I like you. Harvey, in these days of cold-blooded scoundrelism, what

a feeling of restful security comes to us when we meet a man whose voice is soft with the music of truth, and whose heart is warm with honesty. Oh, you needn't look at me that way, Harvey. I am a shrewd pryer into the odd corners of human nature, and—there, you shouldn't apologize for being trustworthy."

I had interrupted him, but really I didn't know what I had said. It must have been a sort of spontaneous combustion of whatever little honesty there was in my heart, but John Lagmuth mistook it for a protest of modesty.

Well, we roomed together. He introduced me into the prim and exclusive, yet delightful society of old books; he open hearted, and I carefully buttoning up my real self. And sometimes I had to laugh when I thought how he prided himself on his judgment of men, What an error it is to suppose that one can actually read character. You cannot judge of the size of the loaf by the crumbs you find under the table; you can tell if the bread be wheat or rye, but that is about as far as you can go. We may be modest observers of action, but we are egotistic readers of motive.

Thus we lived. Once I had a deal with a man and I could have skinned him, and I would have taken off his hide, too, hadn't I been afraid that John might find it out. Indeed, I neglected many

opportunities just on account of the charming old fellow who had confidence in me. I took a keen pleasure in thus deceiving him, and I did not stop at being simply upright, but pushed forward into the realm of speculation—that is, I would perform a kind act and wonder what John would think if he should ever learn of it. People began to talk about me, but public praise was not sweet enough alone to stimulate me; my vanity was fed, and sometimes pampered to ecstasy, by old John's mellow words. I was nominated for office, and when the electors came to receive my false promises I drew back from making avowals that I could not fulfill. What would John say if I should prove to be a political hypocrite? I made no promises, but was elected.

Now, indeed, had I a chance to be an an ideal rascal. I was in a position to make thousands of dollars and run no risks of exposure, but I was afraid that John might in some way find it out. He was my victim, and I could not endure the thought of his rising above me.

The years went by. The night was wild. I sat alone with John. He was dying. How beautiful was his confidence in the love of a Savior; how sublime was his resignation.

"Harvey, they say I can't live till morning."

"Yes," I sobbed.

"It is well."

"Oh, no," I cried; "oh, no; it is not well. What is to become of me?"

"You are to follow, with love in your soul."

And so he passed away. I was elected to a higher position of trust, and my opportunities for yielding to instinct were greater than ever before, but still I was afraid that old John might find it out.

I am an old man now, and my grandchildren are about me. Society honors me, but I care naught for that, for I feel that I deserve it not. I have a hope—now this is foolish——but. I have a hope that old John has spoken well of me away over yonder where the souls of men are gathered.

AN OLD WOMAN'S DREAM.

AN old negro woman, after hanging about the door of a lawyer's office, finally found courage enough to enter. She was an "old-time" negress, and doubtless, in some far away place, a prosperous man turned lovingly to her memory—to the memory of his "black mammy."

"What do you want?" the lawyer demanded.

"Is dis Mr. Wilson's office?" she hesitatingly asked.

"Yes, what can I do for you? Quick; I'm as busy as a bed-bug."

"Wall, dem things is busy sho', er he he," she laughed. "I knows whut da is, caze I wuz de chamber lady in er white 'oman's bo'din' house wunst. She say, she did, 'Aunt Ginny, how we gwine git shet o' deze yere torments? Dat fat generman in de back room 'low, he do, dat da dun chaw'd putty nigh all de hide offen him an' he say he kain't spar no mo', an' I reckin he meant whut he said, fur he got red notts all on the back o' his naik.' Dat's what de white 'oman she 'lowed, an' den I

say, 'Law me, dar's ernuff trouble in dis yere worl' widout folks lettin' da mines go wandrin' off atter bed-bugs. Tell de generman to fling his interleck down on de salwation o' his soul an' let de bugs take da own cou'se.' Dat's 'zackly whut I 'lowed ter de white 'oman."

"But that has nothing to do with your business here, old woman."

"Oh, I's 'war' o' dat, sah, but you fotch up de subjeck, an' I ain't gwine let no pusson outdo me when de subjek is dun fotch up."

"Well let it go. Now what do you want with me?"

"Yes, sah, I'd a dun been come ter dat ef you hadenter switched my mine off on dem bugs, fur ef dar's er thing in dis yere county dat I is 'quainted wid an' has socyated wid it is er bed-bug, fur ez I dun tole you I wuz de chamber lady in a white 'oman's bo'din' house. I'se comin' right down ter de merics o' de case," she quickly added, as the lawyer began to move impatiently in his chair. "I's right dar now. Now, lemme see, how mus' I git at hit? Oh, yes, now I's got it, which is dis: I wanter fetch a lawsuit."

"All right; state your case."

"Yas, dat's what I 'lows ter do. I wants ter fetch er suit ergin Mr Jim Barnes."

"He's the sheriff. Do you mean him?"

"Yas, I means him—plum him."

"What do you want to sue him for? Does he owe you anything?"

"Yas, he owes me all I had an' all I lubed in dis yere worl'—he hung my son in de jail-yard Dat chile wuz all de suppo't I had an now dat Mr Barnes dun killed him, w'y I think he oughter do su'thin' fur me ez I's dun too ole ter work."

"I am sorry for you, my poor woman," said the lawyer, with more compassion than he had doubtless shown for months, "but you have no cause for action against Mr. Barnes. Your son was condemned by the State and it was Mr. Barnes's duty to hang him."

"But kain't I dc nothin' ergin de State, sah?"

"Nothing."

"But whut right de State got ter come snatch dat boy up an' hang him, when da mout a-know'd he wuz all I had ter 'pend on?"

"The State takes no account of such matters. Your son was convicted of murder and that settled it."

"But he wa'n't guilty o' no murder, sah."

"How do you know?"

"I know caze he tole me so. De night 'fo' he wuz hung de naixt day, I went inter de jail ter see him, an' when he dun put his arms 'round me I say, 'Sweet chile, ef I ax you one thing you'll tell me de truf, won't you?' 'Mammy,' says he, 'did you eber

know me ter tell you er lie?' 'No, sweet chile, I neber did, so now tell yo' po' ole mammy ef you did kill dat man.' He tuck his arms frum 'roun' my naik an' put his han's on my shoulders an' look me in de eyes jes' like he useter look at me when he wuz er little chile an' says, 'Mammy I didn' kill him.' 'I b'leves you,' says I, 'de Lawd in heaben knows I does, but de law an' de jedge an' all de white folks dun say you killed him, an' how is one po' chile like you gwine hol' out ergin all de whole 'munity?' 'I kain't hol' out ergin 'em, mammy,' says he, 'an' it ain't no use ter try, for all I kin do is ter ax de Lawd fur His heabenly mussy an' den let de law take its cou'se.' De law did take its cou'se an' my chile died, da tells me, like er man. I doan know what da calls dyin' like er man, but I does know dat no matter how dat boy died, he died like er innercent pusson."

"I remember the brave bearing of your boy," said the lawyer. "I was appointed by the court to defend him and I did it to the best of my ability; but why do you come at this late day and ask relief? Your son was hanged nearly a year ago."

"I knows that, sah, knows it ez well ez anybody, an' has been a b'arin' it wid Christian fortytude, but it kan 'pear like I kin git along no longer widout h[illegible] o' some sort. I has been a-washin' an' er scrubbin' erround de neighborhood, but I 'clar' ter

goodness I's a-gittin' so old an' no 'count dat I kain't do nothin' an' ernudder thing dat caused me ter come wuz dis I has been dreamin' 'bout dat boy ever night lately, an' allus de same dream. I thought I wuz settin' out in de yard er kyaadin' some bats fur er quilt, an' all o' a suddent de sky got re ' den my boy he stepped outen de red an' come right up to me, he did, an' smile, he did, an' say dat i wa'n't gwine be long 'fo' de white folks would fine out dat he neber killed dat man. He been comin' r night jes' dat way fur six week, an' atter he had dun come ergin las' night I thought I'd see you an' ax ef suthin' couldn't be done."

"I don't know of anything—come in," the lawyer broke off as someone stepped into the doorway. "Hello, colonel," he added, recognizing the visitor.

"Haven't but a minute to stay," said the colonel. "Was passing and thought I would drop in and tell you something that I have just heard. You remember that negro boy that you defended about a year ago? Yes, of course you do. Well, an infamous old scoundrel named Foster died over in Calhoun county yesterday, and just before dying confessed that he had committed that murder."

"Thank God fur dat 'fession!" exclaimed the old woman.

"This woman," said the lawyer, "is the mother of that boy and is in need. We are going to see

what can be done for her. I will start the subscription with one hundred dollars."

"You may put me down for another hundred," the colonel declared, "and then we'll go over to the court-house and make the judge and all the boys subscribe."

INTERVIEWED A CORPSE

LIBMAN, the theatrical manager, who in his earlier life had played death so unrealistically, lay on his bed approaching an earnest performance of that role. When his physician told him that his recovery was hopeless, he remarked, with that placidity which has sometimes made the reputation of dying men:

"Well, it can't be helped. Lay me out in the greenroom, where all the boys may come and look at me."

His directions were followed, and the "boys" came and looked at him. His faults were buried and his long-darkened virtues now came back to the light. Evening approached. The reporters had called and had "noted down" the floral designs, and it was evident that the old manager would now lie for a time in the gathering flower-shadows of perfect quiet, when there came a sprucely-dressed young man who said that he would like to "view the body." He carried a large pad of paper and a half dozen pencils sharpened at both ends, and was set off with the airs of a great mission.

"I am a reporter," said he, "and have been sent here to write up this—this sad affair. Yes, I understand that all the boys have been here. I've been interviewing a United States senator and couldn't get away any sooner. We have to grab live issues first, you know, and let the dead ones wait;" and then realizing, or rather supposing, that he had something worth recalling, he made a few flourishing marks on his pad. It may not be a "wind-shake" to this recital if I interject a few words relative to this young man. He was graduated with distinction at an institution of learning that uses a bronzed letter-head, and a few weeks ago came to this city to make a name in journalism. His first exploit was the writing of a 6,000-word description of a $4,000 fire, and the subsequent humiliation of seeing ten lines in print. This taught him to look for something new, and he did look, but found that all the paths leading to great newspaper achievement had been wearily plodded many a time. He thought of this as he stood in the theatre asking permission to see the dead manager. When he had been shown into the green-room, now red with roses, he turned to the attendant and said:

"What a scoop it would be to interview a corpse."

The attendant looked at him in astonishment, not to say disgust.

"Oh, of course I know that such a thing is impossible," the young man continued, "but what a scoop it would be if such a thing could be done. These cards here tell who sent the flowers, eh? Well, don't let me detain you. I can get along all right."

The attendant withdrew and the reporter began to pick about among the floral pieces to place the cards so that he could read them, when suddenly, and with ice water effect, a hollow-sounding voice said:

"So you would like to interview a corpse?"

The reporter sprang back and looked about him. He was alone with the flower-baptized body of the manager.

"Don't be frightened," said the hollow voice. "Remember that I am incapable of inflicting any harm upon you, even if I felt disposed to do so. Stay if you are a man of any nerve. The opportunity of your life has come. Interview me."

"I don't understand—" the reporter gasped.

"Of course not: but calm your excitement and be reasonable."

"What! be reasonable with a corpse?"

"Ah," said the dead man, "you are getting at it now. A man approaches his best when he begins to deliver himself of pointed declarations. If you are sufficiently restored to normalcy, to use a rare

if not a dead word, let me request you to proceed with your interview."

"But I can't believe that a corpse is talking to me," the reporter replied, still nervous.

"Of course not; but you should know that all things are strange to us until we become acquainted with them. You are prepared to believe almost any story of the progress of science and invention on your side of death, but are totally unprepared to believe in any progress made on my side of what men falsely term the eternal and dreamless sleep."

"I was never startled so in my life," said the reporter.

"I can well believe that," the dead manager replied.

"When I spoke of what a scoop it would be to interview a corpse I had no idea that such an opportunity would ever offer itself; and, by the way, you don't move your lips when you talk."

"Of course not," the corpse answered. "If I moved I should not be dead. But if you will place your hand near my lips you will feel the cold air—"

"No, no," the reporter quickly broke in, drawing back.

"Well, then, you'll have to take my statement if you are not willing to investigate my references." Then there came a peculiar noise. Could it be possible that the corpse was laughing?

"I didn't know there were any jokes beyond the grave," said reporter.

"Oh, yes," the corpse replied. "We get them out of the dead humorous papers. In fact the grave supplies the funny departments in all the magazines. But if you are going to interview me concerning my present state please proceed, as I have but a few moments more during which to blow cold air back upon the earth."

"Where are you now?" the reporter asked.

"I am standing just inside another world, but what it is I can not well make out. I have learned a great deal since my arrival, but am still at the very threshold of knowledge. I have learned that the so-called democracy of death is an error. The inequalities of earth are a dead flat prairie compared with the mountainous grades of this existence, but with you caste is fostered by shrewdness, and often villainy. while here classes are on a moral and intellectual basis."

"Have you seen the spirits of many persons who were great on earth?"

"Yes, and the majority of them are a sorry lot. The saddest sight here is the spirit of a rich vulgarian hopelessly attempting to pose with importance."

"I suppose your world, or whatever you may call it, is a place of constant progress. I mean that the

soul climbs higher as—I was going to say as time advances."

"Oh, yes. The good which a man has accomplished is placed as an offset to his evil deeds, and a balance is struck. He is then graded according to his worth."

"Would you mind telling me how you stand?"

"I don't know exactly, but I have been told confidentially that I am likely to be pretty severely judged for stage favoritism. For instance the puffing of lubberly stars when nimble men of true merit should have been put forward."

"Have you seen Shakespeare yet?"

"Have I seen him? How long do you suppose I shall have to wait and apply myself to the courses of study prescribed in this land of eternity before I can come within sight of him?"

"I have no idea."

"I suppose not. I have been told that I may come within sight of him, by close application, in what you would know as 500 years."

"Is he, indeed, so far away?"

"No, he is not so far away in the worldly sense—in truth he may be near me now, but I can not see him—my soul eyes must be purified before they can behold him. I—" there was a sound like a sign and the corpse ceased to speak.

"What were you going to say?" the reporter asked.

The dead manager did not reply.

"They have cut him off," said the reporter. "I'd like to know more, but who will believe me when I say that I have interviewed a corpse?"

He dropped his pad and pencils and started in fright, and then, catching up the appliances of his trade, hastily withdrew.

* * * * * *

A short man with a big neck and curly hair stepped from behind a curtain and softly laughed as though he had played, with the accomplishments of a Punch and Judy voice-trickster, a capital joke on a man who helps to prepare sensational reading matter for an eager public.

MONTGOMERY PEEL.

I SHALL never forget the first time I ever saw Montgomery Peel. He was, as a justice of the peace, presiding at the preliminary trial of Andrew Brukemore, charged with the murder of David C. Cahoon. I was a mere boy at the time, but I remember that Montgomery Peel made a profound impression on me, and I also recollect that when my father, in answer to a question, said that a justice of the peace was not a high officer, I wondered why Peel had taken the place—wondered why he had not declared himself governor of the State. He was a very tall man, with black, inquiring eyes and a great growth of dark-brown whiskers. He presided as my ideal of dignity; his voice was penetrating and his questions were to the point. At first every one appeared to think that Andrew Brukemore was surely the murderer of David C. Cahoon, but as the examination proceeded, as the justice threw the soft light of apparent innocence upon the dark complexion of seeming guilt, it was

plainly seen that the prisoner would not be held to await the action of the grand jury.

"Gentlemen," said Montgomery Peel, arising and addressing the assembly, "I have attempted to look with the eye of calmness and wisdom into this case. I have blunted my ears to the whisperings of prejudice, and within myself I have quieted every impulse that sought to jump toward a hasty conclusion. At first the evidence was bold against this man, but what at first seemed to be a wall of evidence now proves to be a fog of deception. Andrew Brukemore," he continued, turning majestically to the prisoner, "there are times, sir, when we are all called upon to face trials of dark severity. You have faced yours, and now step aside without a stain upon your garments. Gentlemen, it is my desire that you all shake hands with Mr. Brukemore."

The scene was affecting. In that quiet Virginia community murder was of rare occurrence; indeed, many old men who were present had never before seen a prisoner held under so grave a charge. Every one pressed forward and shook hands with Brukemore, and I remember hearing a red-headed, freckled-faced boy say:

"I reckon the folks air cryin', pap, 'cause they air sorry they ain't goin' to hang him."

This trial seemed to make a different man of Montgomery Peel, for he attended church more

regularly, and when his term of office expired he did not announce himself as a candidate for re-election.

One day, several years later, father and I were riding through the woods when we came upon Montgomery Peel, cutting down a tree.

"Why, what are you doing here?" my father asked. "You are surely not chopping firewood this hot weather."

"No," said the giant—and he was indeed a giant —"I am going to build a house."

"What, build a house away out here?"

"Yes, for the house I am going to build would be out of place anywhere except in the quiet woods. I am going to build a church."

"It will take a strong preacher, Peel, to draw a congregation away up here."

"If the size of the congregation depends upon the strength of the preacher, it is likely to be small, for I am to be the preacher."

"You are joking."

"Did you ever know me to joke?" he asked, standing with one hand resting on the tree and gazing earnestly at my father.

"I don't know that I ever did, Peel, but I can hardly believe that a man of your bright prospects could content himself with preaching in this lonely place. Why, there is not a house within three miles."

"Peter sometimes preached many miles distant from a house, yet thousands of people went to hear him."

"Yes, that is true, but Peter proclaimed a new and interesting gospel, while you can only hope to follow in a well-worn path."

He gazed intently at my father, and thus answered: "We have seen a path that was worn, and then we have seen it deserted—have seen the grass and weeds grow where the ground was once made smooth and bare by many feet."

"True enough, Peel; and now let me say that if you are in earnest, I hope that you may be instrumental in drawing thousands from the wickedness of the world."

"I dare not hope to draw thousands," said he. "I dare not picture to my mind a multitude flocking to hear me—but I will dare hope to draw one soul away from an awaiting destruction, and, if I do even that much, I shall feel that my church has been built to some purpose."

As we rode along, my father was silent for some time, and then, as though speaking to himself, said: "The poor fellow has lost his mind."

The report that Montgomery Peel was building a church far away in the woods naturally awakened great interest in the community. Many of the men declared that he must have lost his mind, but the

women, with that hopeful sympathy which ever expects a good result from an ostensibly pious action, averred that he was appointed to bring about a great reformation. Wives persuaded their husbands to assist in building the church, and thus aided, Peel was soon ready to deliver his first sermon. It was on a Sunday, warm, bright and beautiful, that hundreds of people flocked to see him. I remember hearing one man, a cynical fellow, remark: "Oh, he has gone off this way for effect. He knows that if he had gone into a regular church nobody would pay any attention to him. He always was a sort of theatrical fellow anyway."

"Why do you call him a theatrical fellow?" the man's wife spoke up. "I am sure that I never heard of his going to a theatre."

"Mary Ann, you don't know what you are talking about."

"I know enough not to talk about a man that is trying to do good in the world."

"Good in the world!" her husband contemptuously repeated. "There's altogether too much talk these days about men doing good in the world. If a man wants to do good, why don't he plant something and raise stuff for the people to eat?"

"It is quite as important to take care of poor people's souls."

"I don't know about that. The Lord will fix the soul business all right."

The church was crowded. Montgomery Peel stepped forward on a sort of platform, still majestic but with a sprinkling of gray in his beard. A hymn was sung, a prayer was offered, and then the preacher thus began:

"My friends, I will not explain why I have erected this church, other than that I have taken it upon myself to preach the word of God. I do not come before you claiming to have been directly called to deliver the word unto you—that is, I heard no voice telling me to preach, but I did feel that I could do much good and that it was my duty to spend the rest of my life in this service. I shall attempt no revolution, and those of you that have come expecting to hear a new doctrine, or even a new explanation of an old doctrine, will be disappointed. I believe that immortal fruit grows upon the tree of sincere repentance. I believe that each of us owes to God a life of simple purity and honesty. Our allotted time on earth is but a few days, and what should we gain though we be placed in high position among men, for high positions soon crumble into the dust of forgetfulness and men soon pass away. It is not enough simply to declare that we love the Lord, for love is often selfish; it is not enough simply to praise the Lord, for praise is sometimes the off-shoot of fear. While professing to love the Lord, and while showing that we prai e

Him, we must look with tenderness upon the faults of others, we must speak no evil word of a neighbor, neither shall we bear tales, for the man who comes and tells us that some one has spoken in our dispraise, may profess that he took our part and hushed the mouth of slander, yet he destroys our happiness for an entire day. Every Sunday hereafter—that is, so long as I am able—I shall preach in this house, urging repentance and kindness of heart. Many people have wondered at the great change that has come over me. This was a natural result of so unexpected an action. Bear with me—come and commune with me, and I do not think that any one will ever regret that this humble house was placed here among the trees."

Many years passed. I grew up and wandered in foreign countries. My father passed away, and still, a letter from an old friend told me, Montgomery Peel continued to preach. I returned home, and on the following Sunday went to the log church, now almost covered with moss. The congregation was singing a hymn when my friend and I entered.

"Where is the preacher?"' I asked when we had sat down.

"Hasn't come up yet. He lives in a cellar immediately under the floor, and has grown so old and infirm that we sometimes have to wait for him."

The hymn was finished and still he did not come.

Another hymn was sung and then a man arose and said that he would go down and see if anything had happened to the preacher. The man soon returned. "Brethren," said he, "the old man is dead. Those of you who desire to do so may come down and see him."

Nearly every one shrank back, but I went down into the cellar. The old man, shriveled and white with age, lay upon a bed of straw. The place was dark, and when we held a candle near his face we found a paper pinned to the bosom of his shirt. Written on the outside of the paper were these words: "Read this to the congregation."

We went upstairs, and the man that had found the dead preacher thus addressed the awe-stricken congregation: "Brethren and sisters, we have a communication from the old gentleman, whose voice you shall never again hear." He then read as follows:

'The hand of death is upon me, and I feel that it is my duty to say a few words to you, my dear people. You have been so good, so patient and so kind that I love you with all my soul. I have loved you ever since I needed your love. I will tell you when I first needed your love and sympathy: Many years ago I was walking along a lonely road. Night hawks may have cried, but I did not hear them; I could not have heard the

voice of an angel had it shouted at me. I met a man—I knew that he was coming that way. 'Hold,' said I. He stopped and asked what I wanted. 'I want you,' said I. 'What do you want with me?' 'I want you to give me something.' 'What do you want me to give?' 'Your life.' 'Why?' 'Because you ruined my home years ago.' I sprang on him there in the moonlight. I cut out his heart and wiped his face with it. That man was David C Cahoon."

THE CAPTAIN'S ROMANCE

CHAPTER I.

CAPT. RILFORD is known as one of the bravest and most gallant officers of the United States army. He is one of those odd bachelors to whom the passing years bring additional installments of romance. I have seen him go into ecstatic spasms over a spout spring in the mountains, and have known him to lie under a tree and shed tears over the misfortunes of a heroine drawn by some fourth-class romancer; but in action he was so fearless that his brother officers excused what they pleased to term his soft qualities.

A short time ago the Captain was granted a leave of absence. He had long since grown tired of all the fashionable watering-places, and no longer could find anything in the cities to interest him; so the question of how he should spend that time, which was all his own, began to perplex him.

"I am acquainted with both the wild and civilised life of our country," said he, addressing a friend.

"I know the wild Indian and the Boston swell; and, to tell you the truth, I don't know what to do."

"Yes, you are acquainted with the extremes," the friend rejoined; "but do you know much of the intermediate? You have made a study of the Indian in his wild state, but do you know anything of him as a citizen? Why not go to the Indian Territory, the Cherokee Nation, for instance, and amuse yourself by studying the habits of the Indian farmer?"

The Captain was so impressed with the idea that the next day he set out for the Indian Territory. He found the country to be beautiful, with hills of charming contemplation and valleys of enrapturing romance. Streams like moving silver thrilled him, and the birds, whom it seemed had just found new songs, made the leaves quiver with echoing music. After several days of delightful roaming the Captain rented a small cabin, and, having provided himself with a few cooking utensils, settled down to housekeeping. With the rifle and the fishing rod he provided ample food, and as he soon became acquainted with several farmers he thought, over and over again, that his romantic craving had never before approached so near to (in his own words) sublime satisfaction. His nearest neighbor, four miles distant, was an Indian farmer named Tom Patterson. His family consisted of a wife and one

daughter, a rather handsome girl. She had learned to read and write; and, as she seemed to be romantic, the Captain soon became much interested in her.

Patterson was rather a kind-hearted old fellow, accommodating in everything but answering questions concerning his family; but this was not an eccentricity, for all Indians are disposed to say as little as possible with regard to themselves. Ansy, the girl, was fond of fishing, and as no restraint was placed upon her actions, she and the Captain (his words again) had many a delightful stroll.

There was, I had forgotton to mention, another member of the Patterson household, a negro named Alf. He was as dark as the musings of a dyspeptic, but he was good-natured and obliging.

"Rather odd that a colored man, so fond of political life, should live out here away from the States, isn't it, Alf?" the Captain one day asked.

"Wall, no, sah, kain't say dat it is. Dar's er right smart sprinklin' o' us generman out yare, an' dough we's mighty fur erpart, we manages ter keep up good 'sciety, sah. Yes, sah, an' ef it wa'n't fur de cullud generman in dis yare 'munity, w'y de Territory would done been gone ter rack an' ruin. Gaze why? I'll tell you, sah. De Ingin is a mighty han' ter furnish meat, but gittin' o' de bread is a different thing. In udder words, sah, he kin kill er deer but he ain't er good han' to raise

co'n. Yes, sah, de nigger ken plow all roun' de Ingin, an' de Ingin knowin' dis, ginally gins de niggah er good chance."

"You work with Mr. Patterson on shares, don't you?"

"Yas, sah; ha'f o' dis crap 'longs ter me. W'y, fo' I come yare dare wa'n't hardly nuthin' raised on dis place but weeds an' grass. I happened to meet Patterson in Fort Smif one time. He hearn me talk erbout farmin' an' den he made a dead set at me ter come home wid him."

"Are the people throughout this neighborhood very peaceable?"

"Yes, sah, lessen da gits 'spicious o' er pussen, an' den look out. Da looks cuiis at ever' stranger, thinkin' dat he's spyin' 'roun an' tryin' ter talk de Injuns in faber o' openin' up dis yare territory. Dar's er passul o' fellers ober de creek dat calls darselves de Glicks. Da is allus s'picious, an' I tells you whut's er fack, I'd ruther hab er team o' mules run ober me an' den be butted by a muley steer—an' I does think way down in my cibilization dat er muley steer ken thump harder den anything on de face o' de yeth—den ter hab dem Glicks git atter me. Seed 'em hang er pusson once jes' fur nuthin' in de worl', an' da didn' ax him no questions, nuther."

As the days passed the girl seemed to be more

and more pleased with the Captain. One evening they sat on the bank of a stream, fishing. The sun had sunk beyond a distant hill, but continued to pour over his light, like a golden waterfall.

"Ansy," said the Captain, "this is a beautiful and romantic country; but do you not grow tired of living here all the time?"

"If we don't know any other life we do not grow tired of this one," she replied.

"You are a little philosopher," the captain exclaimed.

"I don't know what that is, Captain, but if you want me to be one I will try to be."

The Captain smiled and regarded her with a look of affection.

"The great cities would delight you for a time, Ansy, and then you could come back here with a heightened appreciation of the sublime surroundings of your own home."

"The sun has blown out his candle," she said, pointing. "It is time for us to go."

CHAPTER II.

The Captain could not sleep. He had extinguished his lamp, but on the wall there was a bright light. It grew brighter, and then he saw that it was the face of Ansy. A rap came at the door.

"Who's there?"

"Captain, for God's sake run away. The Glicks are coming after you."

It was the voice of Ansy.

The Captain dressed himself and opened the door. The girl was gone. The moon was shining. The officer was not the man to run away. He closed the door, took up a repeating rifle and opened a small window. He waited. A few moments passed and he saw several men enter the clearing in front of the cabin.

"What do you want here?" the Captain shouted

"We want you."

"What do you want with me?"

"Ask you some questions."

"You may ask questions, but don't come a step nearer."

"What did you come here for?"

"None of your business."

This reply created a commotion. The Captain could hear the marauders swearing. "We'll break down the door," one of them said as he stepped forward. The next moment he had fallen to the ground. When the smoke had cleared away the Captain saw that the rascals were gone, but there soon came from the woods a shower of blazing arrows. It was time to get away. The Captain made a hole in the roof, crawled out, sprang to the ground and hurried into the woods.

Early the next morning he went to Patterson's house. The family had heard of the fight.

"You neenter be 'larmed now, dough, sah," said Alf, the negro, "caze da foun' out dat you wuz er Newnited States ossifer, an' it skeered 'em putty nigh ter def. You gin it ter one o' 'em putty hard, I ken tell you. Shot him squar through, an' da doan think he gwine ter lib, da doan, but dat ain' no matter, fur he wuz de wust one in de bunch. Ef he dies, folks 'roun' yare will hol' er pra'r-meetin' thankin' de Lawd."

Patterson and his wife left the room, but the negro sat in the doorway.

"Ansy," said the Captain, "I owe my life to you."

"Dat you does, sah," Alf replied.

The Captain gave him a significant glance and again turned to the girl.

"Yes, you have saved my life, but that is not the cause of my deep—deep (he glanced at the negro) —deep regard for you."

The girl made no reply. The Captain could have killed the negro. "I will ignore his black presence," the Captain mused. He leaned over and took the girl's hand.

"Ansy," said the negro, "w'en dis yare generman gits through wid yo' han' I wants you ter sew er few buttons on dat ar hickory shirt o' mine."

"You scoundrel," exclaimed the Captain, springing to his feet, "how dare you speak in such a manner to this young lady?"

"Why, boss," the negro replied, "what's de use'n makin' sich er great 'miration. Dat 'oman has been my wife fur putty nigh two years."

The Captain's romance was ended.

AN HISTORIC SHELL.

I AM not going to tell a war story, that is to say, I am not going to invade the province of the monthly magazine, and describe with lingering fondness of detail a campaign made great by my own personal interest. My name is John Norton. During the war I was a captain in an Indian regiment. On the morning of July 4, 1863, we lay under the sullen countenance of Vicksburg. The city had surrendered, and our tired men were lying about on the ground, waiting for the forming of the detachment that should march in and occupy the city. I was lying in a fence-corner with my head in the wavering shade of an alder bush; and, upon glancing in the grass near me, I saw a terrapin crawling away. I took it up, and, yielding to a fancy, I carved my name and "July 4, 1863," on the reptile's shell. I was much pleased with the gracefulness of the lettering, for my civil vocation was that of an engraver, and after contemplating it for a time I shoved the date-bearer through a crack of the fence, so that it might

escape the sight of any of our men. A short time afterward, dusty and hot, I was marching through the streets of the war-stricken town.

Last year I went down to Vicksburg, having become the president of a company organized to establish a cotton seed oil mill in that city. One day, with an idea of securing the coming crop of cotton seed, I had driven out to several large plantations, and was returning, when a dark cloud that hung in the west warned me that unless I sought shelter I should get wet. I drove up to a double log-house situated near the roadside, and was tying my horse, when an elderly-looking man, who had been mowing grass in the yard, hung his scythe in a tree, and came forward to meet me.

"Needn't hitch yo' hoss thar," he said, "fur yo' buggy'll git wetter 'ner drownded rat. Jest come on inter the house, an' I'll have a nigger drive the vehicle under the shed. Glad ter see er rain comin'," he added, as he turned and gazed at the cloud. "Er rain on the Fo'th of July allus putty nigh inshores er good crap uv cotton. Bill" (calling a negro), "come here an' drive this here contraption round under the shed."

He then invited me into the house, and, just as we had reached the hewed log steps, a girl, flirting her apron, and following a hen and chick-

ens, came round the corner of the house. She blushed when she saw me, dropped her apron, and, I thought, was about to run away, when her father said:

"Hurry up thar, Zudie, an' git them chickens in the hen house, ur they'll all be drownded. Come in, mister. It would be a leetle mo' comf't'ble out here on the po'ch, but ez the rain is drivin' thiser way, we better set in this room."

He led the way into a room darkened by the approaching cloud, and, pointing to an old-fashioned arm-chair, said: "Set right down thar, and make yo'se'f ez much at home ez if you'd fotch that cheer with you. Live about here anywhar?"

When I had given him a brief account of myself, he added: "Glad ter welcome you down here. I ain't been around much myse'f, but I like ter see folks that has. Ben livin' here all my life. Wife she died two years ago. Thar's the rain."

The girl bounded into the room. She shook the rain-drops from her "beautiful wealth of hair," and sat down near the window. Her face shone in bright outlines against the darkened panes, and when she smiled at some remark her father made and revealed, with a sudden gleam, her pearl-like teeth, I fancied that a fleck of silver had been thrown against the cloud. I hesitate to acknowledge that I fell in love with her at that moment; I

hesitate because I think we should be influenced by judgment rather than be moved by impulse; yet, as I sat there and gazed at that girl, I could not help loving her; still, it was absurd. She was not more than seventeen; I was getting pretty well along in years. My hair bore not a streak of gray, and I knew that I moved with more agility than many a younger man, but the words, "you are forty-five, you are forty-five," came down on the roof with the rain.

"Look how the roses are nodding in recognition to the rain," she said. "See, they have gotten up a flirtation."

"Silly sentimentalist," I thought; but before I could make any kind of reply, the old man remarked:

"Yas, an' ef that yearlin' ca'f butts ernuther one uv them bars down he'll do er little flirtin' hisse'f. He'd ruther cut er few capers on them thar flowers, er weeds I call 'em, then ter punch his mammy when the milk won't come fast ernuff."

"Why, papa, how you talk."

The old man snickered. "Used ter call me dad," said he, "till I sent her ter er big—big—oh, one uv them big she schools in Memphis, an' now it's papa. Look here, Zudie, ez thar ain't nobody else on the place ter do it, you better scuffle round and git us a bite ter eat, fur now that it's sot in it looks

like this rain mout be goin' ter stay with us some little time."

I protested that I didn't care for anything to eat, but in a moment the girl had vanished.

"Mebbe you think she kain't cook," said the old man, "but I jest wanter tell you that she ken. Gals ain't raised like they wuz befo' the war. Then a gal that could cook a good meal uv vidults wuz sniffed at, but it ain't thater way now."

After awhile the girl came in and announced that the meal was ready.

"Thar's soap an' water ef you wanter wash," said the old man. I went to a washstand, and, in attempting to take up a piece of soap, overturned the dish. Instantly the following inscription caught my glance: "John Norton, July 4, 1863." It was the shell of the terrapin that I had found under the sullen brow of Vicksburg twenty-three years before. I took up the shell, and, pointing to the inscription, explained its origin. The girl, who stood in the doorway, gazed with brightening eyes upon me, and, when I had concluded, she said: "I have also a little story to tell. But come and let us sit down to the table."

When the girl had poured the coffee, and while, it seemed to me, a shade of tender recollection was passing over her face, she turned to me with an attention, charming because it was undivided, and thus began her story:

"When I was a little girl, about ten years of age, I was playing in the yard one day when I found a terrapin crawling through the grass. The lettering on its back, though I could hardly spell out the inscription, at once claimed my interest, and I brought the terrapin into the house. Mother read the inscription and explained it to me. Papa wanted me to throw the 'lazy thing' over the fence, but I insisted upon making a pet of it. I kept it in a box and fed it every day. After awhile we let it stay out in the room, and, though this may seem incredible, it soon learned to answer, in a sort of playful way, when we called it by your name. We kept it nearly five years, and it would have doubtless been alive to-day — for you know terrapins never die of old age—had it not been for a cruel tragedy.

"One day the terrapin was crawling about the room in great enjoyment of its after-breakfast stroll. The cat was lying on the hearth asleep. The 'Fourth,' as we often termed our pet, had made friends with everything on the place, and had often played with the cat, but on this day pussy was morose, with a recurrence of all the meanness she had inherited; and when the terrapin approached her she quickly seized its head with her claws and then, before we could do anything, she chewed its head off. Papa, or dad, as he was then," she

added, with a trembling light in her eyes, "had become so much attached to the terrapin that in revenge he shot the cat. A few days afterward I found poor 'Fourth's' shell on the wash-stand in place of a cracked saucer that we had used for a soap-dish. My story is ended."

We sat for an hour or more and speculated upon the many and devious miles the terrapin had crawled since I had made its acquaintance. When I took my leave, which I did when the rain had ceased falling, I promised to call again at the house of Mr. Craig (for such was his name), but I hardly think that the promise was necessary, for Zudie's beautiful face went back to town with me. I was kept so busy that I did not see my friends again until more than a month had passed. Then I called and spent an all too brief, but to me a thrilling, season. My visits became more frequent —they could not become fewer. Winter came, and we walked beneath the leafless trees. We sat by the roaring log-fire and saw the old man dozing in a corner. Well, we are to be married on the Fourth of next July. The terrapin shell, ornamented with silver and gold, shall be a wedding present to my wife.

OLD RACHEL.

CHAPTER I.

In an old field long since "turned out" stood a small cabin, surrounded by a thick growth of persimmon trees. The place was dreary. To the right was a deep gully in which the body of a murdered man had been found; to the left was a shallow, oozy pond where frogs "bawled" dismally. Old Rachel lived in the cabin, lived there alone. The old woman was tall and of ebon blackness. She was indeed a strange woman, so much so that all the negroes shunned her. It was declared that the old woman was a witch. Abram, the negro preacher, solemnly vowed that one stormy night, while he was lost in the woods, he saw old Rachel riding on a low cloud. The old man was doubtless honest in his statement, for, while on his death bed, he repeated the statement and gave a few extra bits of exaggeration that had been unavoidably crowded out of the original text.

Old Rachel never laughed. Sometimes she sang

or rather hummed a dismal tune, and the negroes declared that her musical effort always preceded some awful disaster.

I lived a few miles distant from old Rachel's cabin. Of course. I believed none of the stories that were told with regard to her, yet I must confess that I stood somewhat in awe of her. I had heard her sing her dismal song and I will own that it always caused a shiver of uneasiness to creep over me.

One night, while returning on horseback from a distant town, I was overtaken by a violent storm. The night was so dark that I could not keep in the road, and my horse was so much frightened by the rapidly repeated peals of thunder and the blinding flashes of lightning that I was carried aimlessly through the woods After a very long time, it seemed to me, I came to an opening. A dim light glimmered in the distance I hurried toward the light, and not until I had gone some distance did I realize that I was approaching old Rachel's cabin. I attempted to change my course, but the horse, attracted by the light, stubbornly resisted my effort.

"All right, then, go ahead," I remarked. "Anything is preferable to being out in this awful night."

I dismounted. My horse jerked away from me

and galloped off. I tapped on the door. No response. I tapped again. I heard some one moving about inside The door was opened, and old Rachel stood before me.

"Come in," she said in a voice that sounded like an ill-boding croak. I entered the house and sat down in front of the fire. Every time I looked up I saw something that caused me to shiver. Rattlesnake skins and cat's paws were nailed to the wall. The old woman took a seat on a black box and narrowly watched me. I felt that she was reading my thoughts.

"Yer ain't afeerd o' ole Rachel, is yer?"

"No," I replied; but she knew better, for she smiled grimly and replied:

"Marster, yer'd jes' uz well own up ter de truf. Yer knows dat yer's afeerd o' me. Eberybody 'peers to be erfeered o' me, but cl'ar ter goodness, I doan know why, 'case I neber done nobody no harm. I reckon it's fur de same reason dat folks is skittish o' de debil's hoss. 'Tain't 'case it bites, but it looks so cu'is. Murster, ain't yer hongry?"

"Yes," I replied.

"Wall, I'll git yer suthin' ter eat. Ole Rachel allus treats her visitors well, fur she doan hab many, de Lawd knows."

She brought a dish of nicely cooked squirrels and some corn bread. My appetite surmounted my

fear, and taking a seat at a table upon which she had spread a new white cloth, I ate heartily.

The storm continued to rage, and the thought of starting out afoot was not pleasant. Old Rachel knew what was passing in my mind.

"Marster, yer kain't go out agin ter night. Dar's er up stairs ter my house, an' I'll sleep up dar an' let yer sleep down here."

"I don't want to put you to any inconvenience," I replied. "You better sleep in your accustomed place and let me sleep up stairs."

"No, yer mus' do jez' ez I tells yer. Dis is Mr. John Petersen, ain't it?"

"Yes."

"I thought I knowed yer."

Notwithstanding the hospitality with which the old woman treated me, I was far from feeling comfortable when I laid down and tried to sleep. The fire went out and a damp chill pervaded the atmosphere. At last I dropped off to sleep, but what a sleep! I dreamed that old Rachel had tied me hand and foot. I struggled and awoke with an outcry. Old Rachel was cooking breakfast.

"Yer muster been dreamin', marster?" she said.

"Yes."

"Dreamin' 'bout me, wa'n't yer?"

"Oh, no, I dreamed that a horse was trying to trample me under his feet."

She smiled, and I knew that she did not believe me.

"How do you get your living?" I asked. "You've got no garden and even if you raised vegetables, people would be afraid to buy from you."

"Oh, I manages," she replied.

Upon taking my leave, I thanked her for the kindness she had shown me, but as I walked along toward home, I remembered with a shudder how she had sat on the black box, gazing at me.

CHAPTER II.

Two months later.—One night when a full moon made the journey pleasant, I was returning from town. Shortly after coming within the neighborhood of old Rachel's house, I heard loud shouts. I spurred my horse and galloped in the direction of the tumult. I soon came upon a large crowd of negroes. They were yelling and were throwing up their arms in wild gestures. Old Rachel, bound hand and foot, stood in the midst of them.

"What's the matter here?" I demanded.

A man who seemed to be the leader replied:

"Oh, we'se got her, sah, an' we'se gwine ter use

her. Dis ole witch, boss, is de cause o' de sickness an' death in dis heah community, an' we'se tired o' it, sah. We called a meetin' o' de cullud folks an' we 'cided, sah, ter hang de ole hag."

"Marster," old Rachel called in an appealing voice, "I ain't neber done dese folks no harm, an' fur goodness sake doan let 'em hurt me."

"You men ought to have better sense than this," said I. "You exercise the right of citizenship, but here you are about to commit a crime on account of superstition. That poor, old woman is not a witch, and, as she tells you, has never harmed either of you. Untie her and let her go."

"We ain't gwine ter do no sich thing," replied the leader. "She's done us a powerful sight o' harm, an' we'se tired, dat's whut we is. Ef we let's her go arter goin' dis fur wid her, she neber will let up on us no mo'. She'll kill all our chillun', an' stock, an' make all de springs go dry."

"Old man, you certainly have more sense than to believe that."

"Neber mine erbout de sense. I knows whut facks is. I know whut dis ole witch hab already dun. She killed er calf fur me night afore last, an' myse'f ain't been feelin' well since dat time."

"De Lawd knows dat ef I had sich power as dat yer couldn' do nothin' wid me," replied old Rachel.

"Look a heah, 'oman, dar ain't no us'in yesse'f

sayin' a word. It am de Lawd's will dat we mus' hang yer, an' no pusson, white nor black, mus' tamper wid de will o' de Lawd." Then addressing me, he added: "How do dis ole 'oman make her libin' ef she ain't er witch? She doan' do no work, yet da tells me dat she has er plenty ter eat; and da tells me, too, dat she kin call er squir'l down outen er tree."

"No, I kain't."

"How do yer git de squir'ls, den?"

"I ketches 'em in traps."

"Whar's yer traps?"

"Scattered er roun' in de woods."

"Yas, an' yesse'f will be scattered in de woods putty soon. Lem," he added, speaking to a man who stood near old Rachel, "put dat rope roun' her naik an' fling one eend ober er lim'."

"Hold on," said I. "You men are about to commit murder, and if you do, you shall all suffer for it."

"Who's gwine ter make us suffer?" the leader asked.

"The law," I replied.

"How de law gwine ter know anything about it?"

"I will tell the authorities."

"Yer mout not be able ter tell so much afore dis night's work is ober. I hab heerd men talk an'

den I'se seed 'em in er fix when da couldn' talk. 'Twon't do ter crowd Black Sam ergin de wall."

A dreadful thought arose in my mind. The desperate negro intended to murder me. I could not save old Rachel, and I was now keenly alive to the necessity of saving myself. I was not armed, but I could possibly dash away. Just as this thought entered my mind, Black Sam took hold of my bridle rein.

"Boss," said he, "git down offen dis hoss, 'case I don't think dat yer'll hab much mo' use fur him ergin mawnin'."

"You certainly wouldn't harm me, Sam?"

"Oh, no," he sardonically replied. "I won't hurt yer. Jes' want ter show yer dat it ain't healthy ter tamper wid er public mubement, sah."

"Gennermen," said old Rachel, "ef yer is boun' ter hang me, do so, but fur de Lawd's sake, doan murder dat gennerman. He fit ter he'p free yer, an' is yer now gwine ter kill him?"

"Neber mine erbout dat, fur we woulder been freed eben ef dis gennerman neber had been bornd. He wasn't thinkin' erbout us when he wuz fightin'. Sam, it's erbout time dis work wuz gwine on."

"Yas," said Sam, "it er gittin' er long toward de kneecap o' de mawnin'. We hates ter shet off yer apmusfere, Cap'n, but den we don't want de law o' de lan' ter come down here wid his han's full o' ropes.

We'se mighty onconsarned folks, but dat woul' be er little too much fur us. Git offen dis hoss."

"Hole on, Sam," exclaimed a powerfully-built negro, who had, up to this time, been a silent observer. "Yer mussen hurt a ha'r on dat man's head, fur he's allus been er frien' ter us."

"He neber wuz no frien' ter me," Sam replied.

"Yas, he's er frien' ter all o' us. Now, boys, lemme say a few words ter yer. Sam is de leader o' dis crowd. Dar ain't no doubt erbout dat; but I doan think dat it's right fur us ter foller him too fur. I wuz putty drunk when I went inter dis thing ter night, but I'se gittin' sorter sobered off, now. It ain't right ter hang dis woman, fur she ain't done no harm; an' ter tell yer de truf, I doan b'l'ebe in witches nohow. Yer needn' grit yer teef, Sam, fer yer knows Bill—an' dat's me—well er nuff ter put faith in whut he says, an' yer knows, too, dat he ain't afeerd o' hell nur high water. Wall, now dat dis fack am 'stablished, let me say dat de fust man whut tries ter do any hangin' will git dis heah hickory stick ober his head. Dat's my proclermation, Sam, an' ef yer doan turn loose dat white man's hoss I'll gin yer er lick dat yer won't furgit agin de sun rises."

"Now, look heah, Dan, whut's de matter wid yer?" Sam asked in a whining voice.

"Gwine ter turn dat hoss er loose?"

"Let us talk erbout—"

Bip. Sam dropped. Bip. Lem dropped.

"Untie dat ole 'oman," exclaimed Dan. Several men hastened to obey his command. "Now," Dan added, "yer's bof free, and reckollect ole Dan in yer pr'ars."

"I'se gwine home wid yer," said old Rachel when we had left the mob.

"All right."

"Let me git up on dat hoss behind yer."

She seated herself behind me. "Now, sah," she said. "I'se gwine ter tell yer suthin'. Er good while ergo, one night, I seed ole Sam kill er man an' fling him inter de gully. He discovered me an' tole me dat ef I didn' keep my mouf shet he woul' kill me. Lately he's been er gettin' skeerder an' skeerder, until ter night he stirred up de niggers an' tried ter hang me. He knows well er nuff how I libs. He knows dat I washes fur er fambly o' white folks."

The next day I filed information against old Sam. He was in bed at the time of his arrest, as he had not recovered from the effect of the blow which Dan had given him. He was tried, convicted and hanged. Old Rachel has worked for my family ever since that time, and we all agree that she is the best servant in the land. Dan cultivates my farm.

HER INSPIRATION.

PEOPLE throughout central Kentucky were charmed by a violin in the hands of Carrie Doyle. This young girl was a wonder even to her friends. She possessed the truest of all genius—that genius which is not lowered by personal contact. She was not beautiful, but her slight form was a symphony of changing and unexpected graces, and her eyes bore the deep richness of old blackberry cordial. She could not remember when she began to express, with the violin, the weird emotions of her childhood. An old fiddle which had long been in the house was her first exercised organ of speech. When she grew up, when her form had become more and more graceful, and when her eyes had become deeper in their richness, society scattered its artificial flowers about her, but, heeding not this painted admiration, she devoted herself to the joy of sweet expression.

One night, in Louisville, Miss Doyle sat in the parlor of a hotel, playing for a circle of friends. The weather was warm, and the door was open. A tall, roughly-dressed young man came down the

hallway, lingered for a moment at the door, and then, with an impulse which he seemed unable to overcome, entered the room and sat down. The company scowled upon the coarse intruder, but Miss Doyle, after looking at him carelessly, turned to him with a richer glow in her eyes. From that moment her music underwent a change. A few moments ago it was all heart; now it was all soul. She steadily advanced toward him. He sat gazing at her with his hands clasped. The music ceased. The girl blushed and sat down. One of the gentlemen arose, and, addressing the intruder, said:

"This is a private party, sir, and we would therefore deem it a favor if you would retire."

The rough-looking young man sprang to his feet, but before he could reply Miss Doyle exclaimed:

"He must not go."

Hereupon an old maid, with elevated eye-brows, shrugged her bony shoulders, and in a voice of painful surprise, said:

"W'y, Carrie!"

"No, he must not go. He is an inspiration—my inspiration. and must remain here. What is your name, sir?"

"Jim Barnes," the man replied.

"Where do you live?"

"Up ther river. Come down night afo' last on er raft. Sold the logs this mawnin', an' 'low ter hull

out frum here agin dinner time ter-morrer. I've hearn er lot uv fiddlin' in my life, but I never hearn nothin' like this yere. W'y, Sam Potter ken make a fiddle talk an' call hogs, an' I allus feel like I'm shuckin' co'n when he's a-holt uv hit; but, Miss, you make it sing er soft song, an' I feel like I'm er settin' in the shade whar ther willers air dippin' down inter ther water."

She took up the violin and began to play. He leaned forward. Her eyes beamed upon him.

The hour grew late. The company arose.

"I hope to see you again," said Miss Doyle, as she bade Barnes good night.

"Yas, I hope so," he replied. "Er passul uv us fellers 'lowed ter go out ter-night an' have er sort uv drinkin' jamboree, but when I hearn that fiddle er singin' er sweet song, w'y, I jest couldn't budge. I know I'm rough, Miss, but the boys all 'low that I've got er heart in me bigger'n er steer; an' I'll tell you what's a fack, I can fling down most ary feller that fools with me. I wush you could make up yo' mind ter come out in our neighborhood some time. You mout have ter put up with co'n bread, but you'd find fellers that would throw back ther years like er mouse when you teched yo' fiddle."

"Thank you," the girl replied. "I should no doubt very much enjoy a visit to your neighborhood, for I am happiest when I am among people who

have not caught from the world the trick of concealing their feelings and who love simple music with true devotion. If you should ever come into our neighborhood, Mr. Barnes, please call at our house. We live a few miles west of Picton, in a large stone house that looks like a fort. Good-bye."

When Barnes had gone the old maid, after many minutes of vigorous fanning, declared that she was surprised and shocked. "I wouldn't have believed it," she said. "I just could not have believed that you would have established yourself upon such terms of intimacy with a clodhopper. Oh, it's just awful, and what will your mother think? W'y, the great, big, rough thing!"

"Mollie," replied the violinist, "you do not understand; you were all cold; that man came in as a ray of warm light. He came as an inspiration. It seemed that I could have played on and on in dreamy and delicious endlessness. My fingers were numb when he came, but he held up glowing coals and warmed them."

"Oh, Carrie, what a silly little goose! How thankful I am that I did not marry at your age."

CHAPTER II.

One afternoon, on a gallery shaded by vines, Carrie Doyle sat gazing over a wheat field. The quail, whose nest had been robbed, alighted on a tree, which was not her wont, and moaned in low and heart-broken "Bob White, Bob White." The tired man, in hickory shirt, tilted a jug at the corner of the fence, and a white boy and his negro playmate danced in glee, and then wrestled with each other where the stubble was rank and soft.

Barnes, conveying a bundle on his back, came into the yard. No one saw him, but he saw the girl, and, with bashful loiter, he stood under a locust tree. He put down his bundle, took it up again, and seemed to be meditating a stealthy withdrawal when Carrie caught sight of him. She uttered an exclamation of delight. He threw down a bundle that was heavier than his bundle of clothes—he threw down his bundle of bashfulness and came forward.

"Let me get my violin," she said. "I have not played so well since I saw you that night. Sit down. I forgot to tell you that my mother is a widow. She is my mother and yet she is my child."

She brought her violin. The heart-broken quail lifted her head and listened. An old maid came down from her room and stood entranced; an old woman threw down her cares and came out upon the gallery. When the music had ceased, Carrie blushingly introduced Barnes to her mother. The young man was surely awkward.

"'Lowed I'd drap over this 'er way an' he'p you folks cut wheat," said he. "Like ter be erroun' whar that gal's fiddle is a singin' uv its sweet song."

He was told to go to work, but he remained after the work was completed. The old maid frowned upon him. The mother did not regard him with much favor, but in the evening when Carrie took up her violin, they all stood in admiration about him, for they knew that he inspired the girl.

Several weeks elapsed. One evening Carrie and Barnes sat alone under the vines. A hawk flew past them, carrying in his claws the quail that had moaned over the destruction of her home.

"I wanter tell you suthin' an' I doan't hardly know how ter tell yer," Barnes said, as he tore off a piece of morning glory vine and twisted it with his fingers.

"You look, as you twist that vine," replied the girl, "as if you are trying to thread the needle of propriety. But I have threaded it. I know what you were going to say; you want to tell me that you

love me. Please don't. You have told me you were from a low family, that your mother was ignorant and that your father was a criminal. Knowing this I can never marry you. And aside from all this, you are ignorant. You inspire me, that is all."

"Yes, I am ignurent," he rejoined, "but I ken learn. I will go away an' study, an' ef I come back er lawyer ur er doctor, will you marry me?"

"Yes."

He went away. Two years afterward he returned. The old maid turned up her nose when he came upon the gallery.

The men were cutting wheat. A quail moaned for the destruction of her home, and a white boy and his negro playmate wrestled where the stubble was rank and soft. When Carrie saw him she seized her violin. She played, and her mother and the old maid stood as nations did when Byron touched his harp—entranced. The music ceased. Barnes and the girl were alone.

"Have you come back an educated man?" she asked.

"No," he replied. "I have tried my best, but I kain't l'arn nuthin'. Whenever I tuck up a book I couldn't see nuthin' but you, an' I couldn't hear nuthin' but yo' fiddle."

"You bring inspiration to me," she said, "and

when you go you take it all away. I can not play when you are gone. My violin refuses to speak except when under your spell."

"Then marry me, and we will live like they say the angels does."

"No, I can not. You must go away. Go now."

"May I come back?"

"When you have learned something—yes."

He went away. The next year he came back. When he stepped up on the porch the girl, who had, upon seeing him, caught up her violin, ran to meet him.

"Sit down," she cried.

He obeyed, and the mother and the old maid came out to hear the music. The hawk flew past with a quail. Hours—hours that were full of soul to the girl—passed in thrilling flight. The mother and the old maid went back into the house.

"It ain't no use," said the young man; "it ain't no use er tall, fur I must allus be ignunt. I have tried ter study; I have got fellers to teach me, but I can't l'arn."

"I can not play without you," she said. "My violin is cross when you are not with me."

"Then be my wife."

"I will see you to-morrow," she replied.

They sat in an old-fashioned room. She put her violin aside and gazed at him.

"You 'lowed you'd see me ter-day."

"Yes."

"An' will you marry me?"

"No."

"Because I'm low an ignunt?"

"Yes."

"Wall, I'll leave you then furever."

"Good-bye."

He went out of the house. He stopped at the gate. She ran from the house, climbed up on the fence, threw her arms about his neck and kissed him; then, telling him to go, she ran back into the house, seized her violin by the neck and smashed it against the wall. The old maid rushed into the room. Carrie stood looking at the fragments of her instrument. The old maid was in tears.

"Molly, why do you weep? What is it to you? Why do you shed tears?"

"Because," the old maid replied: "because I love that fool."

THE MILL BOYS.

I AM going to tell a bit of my own experience—an experience that I am not likely to forget. My name has not a single vine or leaf of romance clinging about its sound; in short, my name is Zeb Brown. I was brought up in the country, without the advantages of education, but by the light of a brush fire I contrived to read a few old books; and permit me to say that a close acquaintance with a few masterful books is often better than a more pretentious education.

A short time after I had attained my majority, which indeed was all I did attain—I went over into a distant neighborhood and began work at a sawmill. The owner of the mill—Old Bill Plunkett—was a brusque old fellow; and, so far as books were concerned, was about as ignorant a man as I had ever seen, except, possibly, my father, who, after the extremest effort, could not have spelled dog.

Old Bill seemed to respect me, not because I could read and write and cipher a little upon a pinch, but

because I was a very strong and active young fellow and consequently very handy in rolling logs.

One day after I had lifted the end of a log which had been declared to be beyond the strength of any man in the party, old Bill invited me to go home and take supper with him. This was a surprise, for he had never shown so great a preference to any of the other boys, holding himself, as he did, greatly above them. I went. He lived about two miles from the mill, not in a frame house as you would suppose from the fact that he owned a saw-mill, but in an old log house daubed with clay and not well daubed either. He hadn't much to say as we walked along the road, and just as soon as we had entered the house, instead of extending to me the courtesy of conversation, he fell to cutting hame-strings from a piece of leather which he took down from the clock shelf.

Some time elapsed before any one else entered the room. Then, after light footsteps in an adjoining room, there entered a girl. As soon as I saw her I knew that I must have looked like a fool. What could you expect of a green young fellow unused to the society of ladies? I say what could you expect of such a young fellow upon beholding a girl whose face must have been a pleasant contemplation to the creative god of beauty, and with hair—ah, what hair! Its silken threads flit across my face now and dim my vision.

"Kit," said the old man, squinting at his leather to see if he was cutting straight, "this here is Zeb Brown what works for me."

She dropped me a graceful courtesy—she could not have dropped another kind—and gave me a smile that seemed to have dropped down from the glorious brightness of her hair.

"Kit," said the old man, "Zeb will eat supper with us. She ain't got no mother," he added, turning to me, "an' haster 'tend ter every thing herse'f."

Supper was soon announced. How well I remember that meal, and how awkwardly did I acquit myself. I turned over a pitcher of buttermilk; upset a molasses jug and dropped a plate of batter cakes in my lap. Kit blushed and I knew she was ashamed not of me, but for me. The old man burst out laughing. "Wh'y," said he, after he had, with the violence of his outburst, blown corn-bread crumbs all over the table, "you ken handle a pine log better than you ken a pancake."

Blind old man. He knew not the cause of my awkwardness.

After supper old Bill sat down to grease his newly-made hame-strings. Kit and I naturally fell into conversation; no, not naturally, for the blood—treacherous fluid—kept mounting to my face, and my great red hands kept getting in each other's way. But I managed to talk, especially when the girl's cordial air had placed me more at ease.

"I have some books that I can lend you," she said. "I have a few very old ones full of poetry and songs. I had great work, I know in protecting one of them. It was a time when leather had suddenly become scarce. Father's passion for hame-strings (here she gave the old man a glance of mischief) naturally drove him to my choice book, bound in leather. He wanted the binding for hame-strings, and I do believe that the book would have been sacrificed had I not succeeded in persuading him that the binding was not strong enough for his purpose."

We had talked but a little while longer when the old man got up, put his can of grease on a shelf, washed his hands in a pan in which he had soaked the leather, and remarked:

"Wall, folks, it's bed-time. Kit, we've got ter hussle out early in the mawnin'. Zeb, we've got a good deal o' sawin' to do to-morrer."

I knew what this meant, and immediately took my departure. The night was beautiful—at least, it must have been. I don't see how there could, at that time, have been any other than a beautiful night. The weather was cold, and I don't know but a sleet was falling, yet, above it all, arises the fact that to me the night was beautiful.

I do not think that I was so handy at my work the next day, for once old Bill cried out: "Look sharp thar, Zeb, whut air you studyin' about?"

Blind old man. He did not know.

I waited and waited for the old man to ask me to his house again, but he did not. Any plow-boy in the neighborhood was welcome there, but, as I previously remarked, old Bill, with quite an un-American spirit, I must say, held himself greatly above the boys who worked for him.

One day the old man, with great flurry, declared that he had left his pipe at home.

"I will go and bring it for you!" I exclaimed, and without waiting to hear any reply, either of remonstrance or agreement, I leaped over the low rail fence that surrounded the mill yard, and set out at a brisk walk along the road that wound among the great trees. Was there ever so long a distance? At last I saw the house. Kit opened the door for me. She blushed. I wondered why a young girl should blush upon seeing so strapping and awkward a fellow. I told her of my mission, and then we both began to talk of the books we both loved so well. Ah! What is sweeter, and what can be purer than the uneducated backwoodsman's love of books? I suddenly thought of the long time I was staying, and sprang to my feet. As I hurried along the road a sweet remembrance came to me. It was that Kit and I should meet the next Sunday at a place which we had appointed.

When I arrived at the mill the old man, pretty

angry he was, too, demanded the reason why I had staid so long.

"I came upon a man whose wagon had broken down in the road," I replied, "and helped him to mend it."

What a lie—yes, what a pardonable lie.

The cold frown of winter was softened into the warm smile of spring. Kit and I had often met. She had promised to be my wife—I had held her in my arms. Old Bill suspected nothing; at least he said nothing, but I knew that in his ignorance he would not consent to our marriage. One day when I met Kit in the woods I found her much excited.

"What is the matter, angel?" I asked.

"Oh, something awful has happened," she replied. "Father found the last letter you sent to me and got some one to read it to him. He didn't say anything, but a terrible light shone in his eyes."

"Don't be afraid, little girl," I said. "He likes me, I think, and when he sees that we are determined he will give in. There, now, don't be afraid."

I went to the mill as usual the next day. The old man had not arrived. I did not dread his coming. Love had made me brave. He came after awhile. He walked straight up to me.

"Good morning," I said.

Great God, he shot me!

Weeks passed before I knew anything. I lay in a little cabin where I boarded. Winter came, and I grew able to walk about the room. I had heard that Kit was a closely confined prisoner. One night, the night before Christmas, there came a violent knock at my door. I opened the door and staggered back. It was old Bill.

"Kit wants to see you," he said. "I brought the wagon. Come."

I went with him. Neither of us spoke. When we reached the house I could hardly mount the door-step. I went in. There was Kit lying on a bed. Oh, what a change! I sank upon my knees at the bed-side, and tried to take her wasted hands, but she wound her arms about my neck. My face lay upon the glorious hair from which the smile, when I first saw her, had seemed to fall.

"Angel," I whispered.

She pressed me closer.

"Angel," I whispered.

Closer she pressed me—closer, closer, and then the pressure was gone—the arms fell. I don't know how long I knelt there, but when I lifted my head the sunlight of a glorious morning streamed through the window. Just then a man entered. "Look here," he said, opening the door. I looked out and saw old Bill hanging from a tree.

"The mill boys," the man whispered.

A CHICAGO MAN.

CHAPTER I.

CYRUS W. HIGGLEGAG, connected with the hardware firm of F. W. Ringleoup & Co., Chicago, is a man of unintentional eccentricity. I say unintentional, because I have noticed that the majority of men whom we term eccentric, are not only wide-awake to their own peculiarities, but seem to be ever cultivating them to a higher state of oddity. Higglegag's strangeness — a rude remark or brusque action — appeared to spring from a sort of nervousness that at times came upon him. Not long ago he made a business visit to a southern town, one of those delightful places that has reached contented old age — a town in whose suburbs a dove softly coos above an old negro, who dozes in the shade — where the lolling dog is almost too lazy to get out of the way of the sprinkling-cart.

Higglegag strolled along the street. He had one of his nervous fits, but would have resented

an insinuation that he might possibly be eccentric. He met a young woman whom he had for some time been watching, just as another woman had passed.

"I knew it," said Higglegag, addressing the young woman.

"What?" she exclaimed.

"I say that I knew it."

"Knew what, sir?"

"Knew that you were going to look round to see how that woman was dressed. Made a bet with myself just now that you would. It's devilish annoying, I assure you."

The young woman flew into a rage. "You are not a gentleman, sir!" she exclaimed.

"Then why don't you run along? Why do you stand here and talk to a man who is not a gentleman? A city girl would have been half way home by this time; but you village belles never lose an opportunity of talking to a man."

The young woman's eyes blazed. "If I knew your name and the place where you are stopping," she said, her voice wavering with anger, "my brother would call on you."

"Here's my card, Miss — Miss at a venture, understand, for you may be the widow of a man who lost his life in the defense of the honor of his horse. I am holding forth at that hostelry

of indigestion known as the Simmons house. If you will excuse me I will proceed."

She took the card, glared at him; and, on the springing feet of rage, hurried away. Several hours later, while Higglegag was sitting in his room, there came a knock at his door.

"Come in."

A tall, strongly-formed young man entered. He glanced at a card which he held in his hand, looked up and asked:

"Is this Mr. Cyrus W. Higglegag?"

"Yes, sir, of the firm of F. W. Ringleoup & Co., hardware dealers, of Chicago, that are prepared to undersell anybody in the market. Sit down."

"I did not come for the purpose of sitting down, sir. I——"

"Just as cheap as standing up, as the barnyard wit would say."

"I have come, sir, to demand an explanation. My sister informs me that you insulted her, and, by——"

"I don't think that I am acquainted with your sister, sir. Sit down."

"I will *not* sit down, damn you! My sister informs me that you stopped her on the street, and——"

"What is her name, please?"

"*My* name, sir, is Norwood Hampton."

"Are you related to the Hamptons of Kentucky? I sold old Major Hampton a bill of goods some time ago. Tall old fellow, slightly bald, but as hospitable as the lighthouse-keeper of fiction, and as brave as — well, as a gentleman. I take it that all gentlemen are brave. Sit down."

Mr. Hampton glared savagely at Higglegag, while one hand fumbled ominously under the tail of his coat.

"I am tempted, without further ado, to shoot your head off. You are a low-minded, cowardly wretch ——"

"Say — hold on a minute — just a minute, and if I don't make every thing satisfactory, off goes my head. In a case of this kind a man never regrets listening patiently to an explanation."

"Proceed; but be brief."

"All right, but you must not fly off if I don't talk to suit you at first. I have always understood that southern gentlemen have a fine appreciation of humor, and I sincerely wish that you may give play to a little of that admirable quality which I know you must have inherited. Without humor there could be no high state of civilization. The savage frowns; the philosopher laughs. Now, Mr. Hampton, if you could but realize my situation, I know that you could not help but

smile. Here you are, demanding an explanation relative to an insult which you say that I have placed upon your sister, and here I am, a man who — many a gentleman in Chicago will tell you — never was known to be guilty of an intentional wrong. It has been said that I am at times peculiar, and I'll be hanged if I haven't begun to believe it. This morning, while strolling along your main street, which I must say is very quiet, I saw a — pardon me — saw a handsome young lady approaching; and, looking back, I saw a woman was overtaking me. 'Now,' I mused, 'I shall see an exhibition of feminine peculiarity. When those women pass, the young one will look back to see how the other one is dressed, to see if she can not detect some outrageous incongruity in the way her clothes hang. The other woman may also look around, but I am betting on the younger one.' Well, sir, the younger one did turn around, just as I expected; and, I don't know why — but surely with no evil intentions — I spoke to her. I don't remember exactly what I said; it may have been insolent, but — well, now here — suppose that men were to turn round to criticise the hanging of each other's pantaloons; wouldn't it warrant any woman in speaking to us of the disgraceful practice?"

Hampton sat down. After a few moments, he said: "The affair is ridiculous."

"Of course it is."

"While you did not mean any insult, Mr. Higglegag, you should not have addressed her, even though your remarks had been pleasant."

"You are right, Mr. Hampton; no one can deny that. I am sorry now, but the deepest threats of direst consequences would not have prevented me from speaking to her at the time. Ever in Chicago?"

"No, sir."

"Greatest commercial achievement the age has seen. Why, sir, there's nothing that Chicago will not undertake. And do you know what has made that town? The municipal patriotism, if I may use such a phrase, of her people. A Chicago man may not have time to talk to you about himself or his father, but he will stand bareheaded in the rain and talk to you about Chicago. That's the way to make a town. Talk it up; never let the subject get cold. In business here, Mr. Hampton?"

"Yes, agricultural implements."

"Never handled the Stagwell plow, have you?"

"No, sir."

"Our firm is manufacturing it now. The Michigan, Ohio and Illinois farmers are delighted with it. There has been a great improvement in plows within the past few years—not a revolution, understand, but such a reduction in price that the old cast plow, which has so long been the stand-by of the small

farms solely on account of its low price, is about to be driven from the market. Still use a great many cast plows round here, don't they?"

"Yes, the poorer class of farmers."

"Ah, hah! and it seems that the poorer class is in the majority. Now here's a steel plow," taking up a catalogue and turning to a well-printed cut, "that we are actually selling at two dollars and seventy-five cents. Just think of it, two seventy-five. The farmers have never before had such an opportunity as this. Why, it's marvelous—simply marvelous! Good steel, hard oak wood. Look at the shape of that beam. There's no doubt about it, the man who introduces this plow to the farmers of this state is going to make a fortune. The only way to get rich, Mr. Hampton, is to take hold of a good thing while its new—before it has become common property. Look at Chicago. Snatches up every new invention. It used to be that poor inventors were compelled to go to Europe to get money enough to bring out their inventions. Now they come to Chicago. That plow, sir, for two seventy-five. Look at the shape of that mouldboard. The old-fashioned plow, you understand, turns the dirt clear over, while this sets it upon edge, keeping the soil comparatively near the surface where it affords most nourishment to the plant. As young and active a business man as you are ought not to take a back

seat for any citizen in this town. Let me send you a few of those plows—say one hundred as a starter."

"Do you think I could sell so many?" Hampton asked.

"What! not sell one hundred? I tell you what's a fact, Hampton, you can run out every other plow—no question about it."

"Well, you may send me one hundred."

"The northern farmers are delighted with this plow, I tell you, and the sooner the farmer of this state follows the northern farmer—now, here, the cheapness of this implement places it within arm's-length of every negro farmer in this state. You just advertise that you sell the celebrated Stagwell steel plow, manufactured by Ringleoup & Co., of Chicago, and you will see that it will take more than two hundred to stock the market. Shall I put you down for two hundred?"

"Yes, go ahead."

"All right. I'll order them shipped at once. Don't be in a hurry."

"I must get back. My place of business is down on Main street. If you have time, drop in and see me."

"I'll do so. By the way, present package of abject apologies to your sister, please."

"I'll fix that all right."

CHAPTER II.

HAMPTON entered a room where a handsome girl sat musing.

"Well," she said, looking up with flashing eyes.

"I've returned," he said, sitting down.

"What did you do?"

"Bought 200 plows from him. Ella, he'd make any man enthusiastic. He—"

"It it possible that you have had a business transaction with a man who has grossly insulted me? Oh, Norwood—" She burst into tears and sprang to her feet. "As my father is dead, and my brother is no longer a man, I must be my own avenger. I will call on him; I will cowhide him as he deserves to be! All the Hampton spirit is not dead!"

She took down a riding whip, turned to her brother and said:

"Am I to go alone?"

"If you go, yes."

"Don't you feel like a whipped cur, Norwood?"

"No, can't say that I do."

"Merciful heavens! is it possible that you are laughing at me? I am ashamed of you; I hate you; I—" She rushed from the room.

There came a nervous tapping at Higglegag's door.

"Come in."

Miss Hampton entered.

"Are you the young lady I saw this morning? Sit down."

"I have come, sir—"

"Yes, I see. Your brother was here just now, and I am greatly indebted to him. These temporary fits of melancholy are awful. All about a girl—beautiful creature; dead now. Oh, how I loved her! Last time I saw her she was looking back at me. Horseran away with her and killed her. You have come to whip me? Well, well, so be it. Oh, Dora Clyde, Dora Clyde, did I think—sit down, please. Pay no attention to my rambling remarks. To die—to die of love! There, put your whip down. In the night strange whisperings come to me—a breath warm with love; but the icy morning breaks, and I see the frost's fantastic dance-marks on the window-pane. Were you ever in love?"

"I fear, sir, that I have wronged you," said Miss Hampton. "I did not know that you were suffering. You must pardon me. Good-bye."

When Miss Hampton returned home, her brother, who was still sitting in the room, looked up and said:

"Well."

"Why, Norwood, that poor man is grieving himself to death about a girl that was killed."

Hampton roared.

"He is, just as sure as you live. I never saw such melancholy in a human being's eyes."

"And I never saw such business."

"Oh, you are mistaken. Perhaps he talked to you of plows because he saw the girl on a horse—not exactly that, but probably he did not know what he was saying."

"Why, we made an extensive trade, and, by the way, he told me to offer you his apologies."

"Why didn't you tell me? If you had told me I wouldn't have gone to see him. You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"I rather like him, Ella, and I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll invite him to supper to-morrow evening."

"I don't know about that. It wouldn't seem exactly right, would it?"

"I think so. The whole affair has been so ridiculous that anything would be appropriate now."

The next morning Higglegag called on Hampton at the store, and, when invited to supper, heartily agreed to come.

Hampton and his sister lived alone in an old red brick house almost covered with vines. There were

many shrubs in the yard, and along the paths romance strolled hand in hand with quiet fancy.

When they sat down to the table, Miss Hampton, looking at Higglegag with an expression of tenderest sympathy, told him that he must make himself perfectly at home.

"I shall make myself near enough at home to feel at ease," he replied, "but shall not be so much at home that I may fail to remember that it is being here and not there to which I am indebted for so pleasant an evening."

"You are a shrewd flatterer as well as (glancing at her brother) a sharp business man."

"All sharp business men, Miss Hampton, are shrewd flatterers, but they are also men who believe that a timely statement of an effective truth is worth more than a groundless compliment."

She looked at her brother, and, catching his mischievous eyes, smiled.

"The average Chicago man, I am told," she said, "does not read many books."

"The average man, no matter where you find him, is not devoted to books," he replied. "The Chicago man may not read many books, but he thinks a great deal. While some men are worrying over a theory advanced in a book, the Chicago man is watching the great kite of this morning's thought and now's action—the daily newspaper. To-day he

sees exploded or verified the book-worm theory that will be advanced next year."

"Do you like poetry, Mr. Higglegag?"

"Well, yes, successful poetry. In fact, I like anything that is a success, and deplore everything that is a failure."

"What do you think is the highest aim in life?" she asked.

"Success in any praiseworthy undertaking, to make the best possible living, to respect everything that is true and reject all shams."

The evening was an enjoyable one, but when Higglegag had gone Miss Hampton could not help thinking that he had lost much of his air of romance. While she sat musing her brother said:

"He seems to have forgotten to bring that melancholy expression of eye along with him."

"Norwood, why would you destroy the budding memory of a pleasant evening by making such a coarse remark?"

"Why budding memory?"

"Because the event is so recent that it has not had time to unfold into a flower of recollection."

"Humph, Ella, he must have impressed you. Pity he does not add dry goods to his line of plows."

"Pity that some one who is strong enough does not give you a plow line," she good naturedly replied. "Wonder how long he will be in town?"

"Haven't heard him say, but until he teaches all our merchants how to become wealthy, I suppose."

The next afternoon, while Miss Hampton was walking in the flower garden, Higglegag came along and stopped at the fence.

"Looping up nature's expressions of sentiment, eh?"

"Why, Mr. Higglegag, that is really a poetic idea," she replied. "One would hardly have expected it from—"

"A Chicago man," he suggested.

"I didn't say that," she rejoined.

"You are fond of flowers, undoubtedly."

"Yes, successful flowers."

They both laughed, and caught thrilling glimpses of each other's eyes.

"How long do you expect to remain in town?" she asked.

"I don't know, exactly. The house owes me a vacation, and I have written demanding it."

"I did not think that Chicago men took vacations."

"Yes, they do when they have been successful."

"Won't you come in and sit down? Brother will be home pretty soon."

He went in, but instead of sitting down strolled with her in the garden; and, although several hours passed before Hampton came, Higglegag waited until he did come. In fact, he stayed until after

supper. During the next few weeks the Chicago man called, in the sly opinion of Hampton, with sentimental frequency.

One evening while Higglegag and Miss Hampton were strolling along a quiet and perfumed street, where roses, heavy with richness, hung over the fences, the girl, with sudden and seemingly unpremeditated change of subject, remarked:

"It may be a painful memory, and perhaps I do wrong in speaking of it, but you have not told me anything of—of—that young lady."

"Which young lady?"

"Why, that Miss Dora Clyde. Don't you remember speaking of her the first day I saw you?"

"Oh, yes! that was all put up. I mean that it was a pretense."

"I didn't think that you would be so deceitful."

"Stood me in hand to practice a little deceit on that occasion." They had reached Hampton's gate. "I didn't want to be whipped by the loveliest creature I—Have I offended you?"

She had quickly stepped inside and closed the gate, and had turned her back upon him.

"I ask if I have offended you?"

"Are all sharp business men shrewd flatterers?" she asked.

"Hang those formal expressions. Ella—By the way, Hampton, I—I—hang it! I was about to tell

your sister that I love her and ask her to be my wife, but your sudden appearance—there she goes Ella, come back. Well, good-bye."

He called again the next evening.

"I ought not to let you come in," said Ella, when she met him at the door.

"Why?"

"You know how you talked last night."

"Then you are not in sympathy with what I said?"

"Not that, but I didn't want you to blab it so everybody could hear it."

"Ella," taking her hands. "I have been thinking over this affair, and although I love you devotedly, before we can become engaged I fear that the sacrifice I shall require of you will be too much for you."

"Who said that we were to become engaged?" she asked.

"Nobody; but you understand the situation, don't you?"

"Yes."

"And you will acknowledge that you love me?"

"I cannot conceal it. What is the sacrifice?"

"I am sure you can not make it."

"Yes, I can. What is it?"

"You must promise—"

"Well?"

"That when you pass a woman you will not look back to see how her dress hangs."

They broke into a hearty laugh, and she playfully boxed his ears.

WITHERED JOE.

THERE was not a man in the Dry Fork neighborhood who was not afraid of old Sam Peters. The old fellow's looks were quite enough to frighten the timid, and his violent exclamations rarely failed to make men of nerve feel ill at ease. Sam had killed several men. On one occasion, over at Slawson's bayou, he encountered a desperate fellow from Texas. They at once recognized each other as rivals, and, upon a pretense of having had a former altercation, agreed to fight. The "time-honored" handkerchief method of combat was adopted; that is, each contestant should take hold, with his teeth, of a corner of the same handkerchief, and then fall to work with bowie-knives. It may, without digression, be said that this plan of fighting, long since ruled out of the most polite circles of society, is rather dangerous.

When a fellow named Collins had, with courteous accommodation, whetted the knives on his boot, the sad discovery was made that no one had a handkerchief.

"This is a putty come-off," said Collins. "The

idee uv losin' all this yere enspiriten' 'citement jest on ercount uv a rag is a disgrace ter er civilized curmunity. Hol' on er minit, fellers, I've got er idee."

He took off his wheat-straw hat, tore out the calico lining, and, handing it to old Sam, remarked:

"Thar's the necessary dockyment. The diffikilty is at a eend. Chaw yo' corners."

The men took hold. The knives flashed. The man from Texas fell in a dying condition. Old Sam staggered away severely wounded.

There also lived in the Dry Fork neighborhood a crippled boy named Withered Joe. He was of so little importance that scarcely any attention was paid to him. His only companion was a dog—a snaggle-tooth, wretched animal with one eye. The cripple would often take the dog in his arms and mourn over him. One night two men were riding along a lonely road. "Hush!" said one of them, reining up his horse, "what curious noise is that?"

"Come on," the other man replied. "It's only Withered Joe whimperin' over his dog down thar in the holler."

Old Sam's outrages became so numerous that the authorities decided to arrest him. The sheriff declared that it would require twenty men.

"It makes no difference," said the circuit judge, "he must be arrested."

The sheriff summoned a posse. Old Sam was easily found. He placed his back against a tree, drew his bowie-knife, and said that he didn't feel like being arrested.

"You wouldn't kill your friends, would you?" the sheriff asked.

"Yes, I'd kill a lamb if it tried to arrest me. I wa'n't bo'n ter be tuck up like er stray hoss."

"Sam, the people want you."

"They kain't git me. Thar ain't none uv you that want to be killed, I reckon."

"No, b'l'eve not."

"Wall, then, keep yo' distance."

"The man who will rush on him shall be the next sheriff uv this county," exclaimed the leading officer.

"Then why don't you do it, an' be re-elected?" some one rejoined.

"Becaz," the sheriff replied, "I've got a wife an' chillun dependin' on me."

"Hello," said a fellow named Collins; "yonder comes Withered Joe, an' his snaggle-tooth dog ain't with him, nuther. That's strange. Reckon he's come after ole Sam."

The men shouted, and old Sam, lifting his upper lip till a wolf-like smile showed beneath it, reached out and clipped off a red-bud twig with his knife.

Withered Joe approached. In his hand he carried a long knife.

"Hello, Joe," the sheriff called, "have you started out ter cut a mess uv greens?"

The cripple did not reply. His eyes, in a sort of dead set, were fixed on old Sam. He did not stop, but passed the circle of men.

"Come back here, fool," cried the sheriff. "Come back, or he'll cut you in two."

He did not stop. Old Sam gazed at him in angry astonishment.

"Don't come nigh me, you dried-up crab-apple. Don't come here, I tell you. I'll kill you like I would a snake."

The cripple walked straight ahead. Old Sam raised his knife.

"One mo' step," he said.

Another step. The knife came down, but the cripple shrank, or seemed to whither to one side; and then, with the quickness of a cat, he plunged the knife in old Sam's hip. There arouse a shout. The men rushed forward, seized old Sam, and bound him.

"You are a man," said the sheriff, addressing the cripple. "Yo' great respeck fur the law shall be rewarded."

"I ain't got no respeck fur ther law," rejoined the cripple, bursting into tears. "The feller killed my dog."

Two men were riding along a lonely road.

"Hush!" said one of them, reining up his horse. "What curious noise is that?"

"Come on," the other one replied, "It's only Whithered Joe whimperin' over the grave uv his dog down thar in the holler."

IN THE CUMBERLAND MOUNTAINS.

A PHYSICIAN told Tom Blake that he not only needed a change of scene, but that to regain his health he required absolute freedom from business cares. "I would advise you," said the doctor, "to get on a horse and ride away, no matter whither. Go to the mountains—shun the merest suggestions of civilization, in short, sleep out like a bear."

Blake attempted to act upon this advice. He stuffed a few shirts into a pair of saddlebags, mounted a jolting horse and rode up into the grandeur of rugged mountain gorges. But to him the scenery imparted no thrill of admiration. His heart beat low, and his pulse quivered with a weakening flutter. The fox that in sudden alarm sprang across the pathway, the raccoon that, with awkward scramble, climbed a leaning tree, called not for a momentary quickening of his blood. He was passing through one of the most distressing of human trials. He had no disease; every muscle was sound. What, then, was the trouble? You shall know.

He lay at night in a bank of leaves. Now everything startled him. He trembled violently when the sun went down. Once he sprang, with a cry of alarm from his bed of leaves; then he lay down again, ashamed. The horse had snorted.

Farther and farther he went into the wildness of the mountains. One evening he came upon a narrow road, and, following it for some distance, saw a house. It was an old inn, with a suggestion of the brigand about it. He tied his horse to a fence made of poles and went into the house. There he found a man with a parchment face and small, evil eyes, and a woman who, on the stage, could have appropriately taken the *role* of hag.

"Why, come in, sir, come in," said the man, getting up and placing a chair for Blake. "Wife and I have been so lonesome for the last day or so that we have been wishing somebody would come. Haven't we, Moll?"

The woman removed a cob pipe from her mouth, drew the back of a skinny hand across her blue-looking lips, made a noise like the gutteral croak of an old hen with the roup, and said, "Yes."

"You'll of course stay all night with us?" the man remarked. "We can't possibly allow you to go on, especially as we are going to have falling weather. Oh, when it comes to hospitality, why you'll find it right here. I'll go out and put up your horse."

Blake entered no objections. His deplorable condition would have forced him into a compliance with almost any sort of a proposition. The man went out, put up the horse and soon returned with a log of wood. "The more fire we have the more cheerful it will be," he explained. "Out prospecting?" he asked.

"No," Blake answered.

"Don't live nowhere near here, I reckon?"

"No."

"How long do you expect to remain in this part of the country?"

"I don't know."

The old woman mumbled and then, with a grating croak, said:

"He don't 'pear willin' to tell much about hisse'f. Some folks is mighty curi's thater way."

"Never mind, Moll," the host quickly responded. "It ain't quite time for you to put in, except in the way of getting us a bite to eat."

She arose, without replying, and began preparations for supper.

"It is a dull time of year with us," said the host. "It has been about two weeks since our last boarder left. But I reckon business will pearten up a little when the fishing season opens."

Blake paid no attention, except when some sharp and unexpected note in the old man's voice produced a tingling of the nerves.

Shortly after supper, Blake declared his readiness to go to bed. He was shown into a sort of shed room, separated by a thin partition from the room which he had just quitted. The old man placed a spluttering candle on the hearth, and, expressing the hope that his guest would pass a quiet and peaceful night, withdrew.

Blake lay unable to sleep. Once the spluttering candle caused him to spring up in bed. Suddenly his ears, extremely sensitive with his nervousness, caught the sounds of a whispered conversation.

"It won't do to shed blood," said the old man. "It won't do, for we made a mighty narrow escape the last time. It's impossible to get blood stains out of the house."

"I b'l'eve them saddlebags air full uv money," the hag replied.

"I don't doubt that and we've got to have it."

"How air you goin' ter git it?"

"Poison him. I wasn't a sort of doctor all these years for nothing."

"You never was no doctor ter hurt."

"But I'll be a doctor to-night to hurt."

"How air you goin' ter pizen him? Thar ain't a speck uv pizen on the place."

"Where is that morphine?"

"Up thar in the bottle, but will that fix him?"

"Yes, and in such a way that nobody will suspect anything."

"How are you goin' ter do? Hold it under his nose?"

"Hold it under his foot!" the man contemptuously replied. "I am going to make him take it."

"How?"

"I'll fix it."

"Then there occured a whispering of which Blake caught the following:

"Think that's ernuff?" the woman asked.

"It's nearly half a teaspoonful. Enough to make five men sleep throughout eternity."

A moment later the host entered Blake's room. His manner was free from embarrassment. In one hand he held a glass containing water.

"Stranger, I don't want to disturb you, but it occured to me just now that you looked as if you might be going to have a spell of sickness, so I thought I would bring you some medicine. I am willing to help a man but I don't want him to be sick on my hands. I am a doctor, but I don't propose to keep a hospital."

"Suppose I refuse to take the medicine?"

"Then you'll put me to the trouble of pouring it down you, that's all. I am a mighty gentle sort of fellow as long as everything goes on all right, but if a hitch occurs, why I am as rough as a swamp oak."

"Are you sure the medicine will not hurt me?"

"Hurt you! Why, it will do you good. Here, swallow it down."

Blake drank the contents of the glass. The host smiled, bowed and withdrew. Then there followed another whispered conversation.

"Tuck it all right, did he?"

"Like a lamb. He'll be all right in a half hour from now."

During fifteen or twenty minutes Blake lay quietly in bed. Then he got up, dressed himself noiselessly, arranged the bed covers to resemble the form of a man, took his saddlebags, stepped out at a back door, went to the stable, saddled his horse, mounted and rode up to a window and looked into the room which he had occupied. Cattle were tramping about the yard, and the noise made by the horse attracted no attention. He took a position so that he could, unobserved, see all that passed within the room. The "doctor" and the old woman soon entered. They made no attempt to speak in low tones.

"Whar is his saddlebags?" the woman asked.

"Under his head, I reckon. Snatch off the covers. He won't wake up."

The old woman pulled off the covers and uttered a cry of surprise. Blake tapped on the window glass.

"Say, Dock," he called, "bring me the rest of that morphine. You see, I have been a morphine eater for a number of years, but am trying to quit. Your dose came in pretty handy, for I was in a bad fix. I am all right now, and am much obliged to you. Good night."

Less than a week from that time the "doctor" and his wife were in jail, charged with the murder of a traveler. They were hanged at Greeneville last September.

THE WILDCAT CIRCUIT.

RANK weeds grew about the only remaining church on Wildcat circuit, and over the door there grew a green saw-brier. Wild hogs slept in the old log house, and the screech-owl, with its nerve-startling tremulo, roosted under the eaves. Conference after conference had attempted to reclaim the old church, for the vines of many fond memories were clinging about it, but each attempt was a failure. There had been a time when the glad shout of the regenerated and the thankful prayer of the sanctified called forth a hymn of joy from the devout congregation, but that time was long ago, for boys who had then, clinging to the skirts of their excited mothers, wondered what the commotion meant, had become fathers. The religious system, and consequently the social complexion of the neighborhood had been changed by the war. The saintly brother, harrassed by guerillas and robbed by marauders that belonged to both armies, moved away, many of them, and those who remained forgot their church relations and finally became rough sneerers at the creed of

which they had once been strong but gentle supporters; so, many years later, the uncouth men of the Wildcat circuit laughed at the efforts of conference and actually mistreated the preachers who came among them.

Several weeks ago, a newly made preacher, concerning whom there had arisen considerable discussion relative to the circuit to which he should be sent, arose in conference and said:

"Brethren, it appears that somebody either wants for himself or for a friend, every place that is suggested for me. Now, all I want is a chance to work. I am not looking out for a place where they feed a preacher on fried chicken and at night tumble him into a feather bed. I have gone into this preaching business with the expectation of having a pretty tough time, but I am prepared for it. I was graduated with honors from the College of Toughness, having been editor of a county paper during a campaign for sheriff. Now, brethren, I am very sorry to see that there should be any controversy on my account, and to show you that I shall be satisfied—yea, even pleased with any assignment—I will announce my determination of re-establishing the Wildcat circuit."

The young preachers, given to levity, began to laugh, but the older ones, several of whom had hoed the row of experience, shook their heads gravely and were serious.

"Brother Gregory," said an old man, "do we understand you to mean that you will face a gang of ruffians and attempt to plant the gospel in the soil where it once flourished but from which it was violently torn up by the roots?"

"That is what I mean. These men may be ruffians, but they will not dare to use violence."

"They may not use positive violence, Brother Gregory, but they know how to apply a thousand annoyances. They make a preacher ridiculous and then laugh at him. I went there some time ago, but I will never go again."

A number of the brethren strove to dissuade Brother Gregory from carrying out the plans of his rash determination, but the next day, the head strong evangelist set out on a journey to the Wildcat circuit. Without telling the object of his visit to the neighborhood, he engaged board at a house situated near the church, and, the next morning after his arrival, he gave himself over to the work of clearing away the weeds that grew about the sacred old pile of logs. He pulled down the green-brier that grew over the door, washed with soap-suds the inside of the house, and, after completing his work, announced to a number of curious spectators that there would be preaching the following Sunday.

When the time arrived the house was well filled with "snickerers" and scoffers, but Brother Gregory

stepped up into the oak-slab pulpit and declared that he had come to preach, and that the privilege of retiring was granted to any one who did not care to hear him. "I come as a friend to persuade, and not as an enemy to coerce," said he. "I have come here to join you in all your sympathies, in all your sport and pastimes."

"Glad to hear that," old Nick Dacy spoke up. "Might'ly pleased ter know that you air goin' ter jine us, an' as this is jest about our time uv day ter caper a little, w'y, you can fall in right at once."

Benches had been removed from the center of the room, leaving an open space. Nick stepped into the "clearing," and, standing on his head, cracked his heels together. The congregation shouted with laughter. The preacher came down out of the pulpit, stood on his head and cracked his heels together. Old Nick got down on all fours, galloped about the open space and yelped like a dog. "Ounk, ounk, ounk!" he barked.

The preacher got down on all his fours and galloped about with a high-keyed "ounk, ounk, ounk!"

Old Nick lay down and grunted like a hog. So did Brother Gregory. The people exchanged many glances of amazement.

"Say," said Nick.

"Well," the preacher answered.

"You air sorter one of the boys, ain't you?"

"I told you I had come to join you in your sports and pastimes."

"I thought you come to preach."

"So I did, but I do not intend to preach until you are all ready to listen."

"Do you reckon we need preachin' ter so mighty bad?"

"Not half so much so as do the people who live in the towns?"

"Then why don't you go and preach to them?"

"Because I do not wish to destroy my natural manhood by talking to people whose every aim is to be unnatural."

"How are you on the rassle?"

"I am not an expert at wrestling, but if the congregation so wills it I will try you a few falls."

The congregation, with a yell, expressed an enthusiastic willingness. The wrestling took place outside, as the puncheon floor was rather hard. Old Nick threw the preacher, but Brother Gregory, still willing to enter into the sympathies and to take part in all the sports and pastimes, declared his readiness for another "flirt." The congregation cheered this evidence of nerve, and the two men interlaced themselves in a combination known as the "Alabama stitch."

"Cut your capers," said old Nick.

"Lead off with your fancy steps," the preacher remarked.

This time Nick went down. "Throw off the tie," a justice of the peace shouted. "Give us another fall."

"No, let me make a suggestion," said Brother Gregory. "I have entered into your sympathies, now you enter mine; I have joined your sports and pastimes, now you join mine."

"That ain't no more than fair," old Nick exclaimed.

"That's fair!" the congregation shouted.

"Well, then, come inside now and listen quietly to what I have to say."

They went in and sat down, and now a hush fell upon the crowd which, a few moments before, had been so noisy. "My dear friends," said the preacher, "I want to tell you of a man whose life was tender and beautiful, who shared the sorrow of all humanity. He poured faith and love into hearts that were broken; he plucked the evil glitter from the eye of human wickedness, and in its place set the warm glow of trust and affection. Do you want to hear about this man?"

"Yes, tell us!" the congregation shouted.

Then the preacher, in words as simple as the prattled story of a child, told them of the Saviour of mankind. It was a story that many of them had heard and forgotten, and the recollection came back to them like a warm whisper of love. When the

story was finished, when a hymn had been sung, the people silently dispersed. The next day a hundred axes rang in the woods. The men were getting out logs to be used in the construction of a new church.

OLD BILL'S RECITAL.

WHEN Bill Hempsey married Tal Harwell there was great surprise in the Nubbin ridge neighborhood. Bill was worthy of respect and was respected; he was worthy of confidence and had been entrusted with a county office, yet when he married Tal Harwell there was heard, at every turn, murmurs of astonishment. Tal was a beautiful girl, and was much younger than Bill; her form, untrained by any art, but with woods-like wildness of development, was of exquisite grace, and her hair was of gentle waviness, like the ripples of a sun-ray catching rivulet. Handsome young fellows, Ned Royston, whose bottom field of corn is this year the finest in the neighborhood, and Phil Hightower, who has just built a new, double log-house, chinked and daubed, paid devoted court to the beauty, but when old Bill came along—old Bill with a scar over one eye where a steer kicked him years ago—and asked her to marry him, she shook off the mischievous airs of the beauty, took up the serious

expression of a thoughtful woman and consented without a moment's hesitation.

Bill owned a little old log-house, stuck up on the side of a hill, and though viewed from the county road it might have seemed a dreary place, yet standing in the back door, Bill could look down and see wild plum bushes bending over the crystal water of the creek—could see a wild meadow far down the stream and could hear the song of the rain-crow.

Several years passed. The gossips reluctantly agreed that Bill and his wife were happy, that is, reasonably happy, for the gossips never submit to a complete surrender. One day while Bill was away from home Ned Royston came to the house. Tal came in when she heard footsteps, and upon seeing the visitor stood wiping her hands on her apron. She had been washing and a bubble of suds on her hair, catching a ray of light, flashed like a diamond.

"You've about forgot me, hain't you Tal—Miz Hempsey?"

"No, how could I forget you when I see you at church nearly every Sunday? Sit down."

"Yes, you see me," Ned replied, seating himself, "but as you never speak to me I 'lowed that you had dun fergot me."

"I never forget a friend."

"Much obleeged. You look tired; sit down yourse'f."

She sat down; Ned continued:

"You do a good deal of hard work, don't you?"

"No more than any other woman, I reckon."

"You do more than I'd let my wife do."

"Yes, all men talk that way before they are married."

"And some of them mean what they say, Tal—or Miz Hempsey."

"But the majority of them do not."

"I know one that does. Tal, if you had married me you never would had to work none."

"You let your mother work."

"Yes, but I wouldn't let you work. I wish you had married me, Tal, for I ain't been happy a single hour sence you told me that you wouldn't, not a single one. I uster be fonder of persimmon puddin' than anybody, but I ain't eat narry one sence you 'lowed that you couldn't marry me. Tell me, Tal, air you happy?"

"Happy as most women, I reckon."

"But most women ain't happy."

"Mebby not."

A short silence followed; Ned twisted his hat round and round. Tal wiped her hands on her apron.

"Tal—you don't care if I call you Tal, do you?"

"No, I am not particular."

"But you wouldn't let everybody call you by your first name, would you?"

"No."

"Tal."

"Well."

"Do you know what I've been thinkin' about ever sense I saw you at meetin' last Sunday?"

"How am I to know what you've been thinkin' about? Hardly know sometimes what I'm thinkin' about myse'f."

"Would you like to know what I've been thinkin' about, Tal?"

She sat twisting her apron; a cat purred about the legs of her chair. A chicken, singing the lazy song of "laying time," hopped up into the doorway. "Shoo!" she cried. "The chickens are about to take the place."

"But that ain't got nothin' to do with what I've been thinkin' nor about you wantin' to know it. Do you wanter know?"

"You may tell me if want to."

"Sho' nuff?"

"Yes, if it ain't bad."

"Oh, it ain't bad." He untwisted his hat, straightened it out by pulling it down on his head, took it off, and, beginning to twist it again, said:

"I've been thinkin' that you wa'n't happy livin' with a man that don't 'preciate you—hold on now, let me get through." She had moved impatiently.

"Man that don't 'preciate you; and I've been thinkin' that I would come over here and—and ask you to run away with me. Wait, Tal—please wait." She had sprung to her feet. "Just listen to me a minit. Folks uster think you was happy, but they know you ain't now. Tal, please wait a minute. Tal, for God's sake let me explain myself. Say, wait just a minute. You won't tell Bill, will you? Oh, you won't do that, I know. We understand each other, Tal, don't we? You understand all my foolin' and skylarkin', don't you? Tal, oh, Tal—" She was hastening down the slope toward the wild plum bushes. "Don't say anything," he shouted. "Don't, for if you do there'll be trouble."

"What's the matter, little girl?" Bill asked that evening as he was eating his supper.

"Nothin'."

"You don't 'pear to be as bright as usual."

"I thought I was."

"But you ain't. Thar's some new calico in my saddlebags that'll make you as putty a dress as you ever seed. Got red and yaller spots on it that shines like a sunflower. Look here, little gal, thar's somethin' the matter with you and you needn't say thar ain't. Come here now." He shoved his chair back from the table and took her upon his lap. "You know thar's somethin' wrong, now, and you air jest tryin' to fool me. I haven't done nothin' to hurt your feelin's have I?"

"No."

"Then what is the matter? Oh, don't cry that way." She sobbed on his shoulder. "You'll make me think that I ain't the right sort of husband if yon keep on. Mebbe I ain't too. I'm gittin' old and grizzly, and I ain't good-lookin' nohow, while you 'pear to git puttier and puttier every day."

"Bill," she said, putting her arms around his neck, "you mustn't talk—you mustn't think that way. You are the best man that ever lived, and if you'll promise not to git mad I'll tell you what ails me."

"Why, law me, child, I couldn't git mad if I wanted to."

She told him; he sat for a few moments in a silence of deep meditation, and then, with a brightening countenance, said:

"Why, that ain't nothin' to git mad about, child. It's all right; and let me tell you that any man after seein' you a few times is bound to love you and I reckon he would be willin' to run away with you. Why, bless my life, I'd run away with you in a minit, er haw, haw! No, indeed, honey, you kain't blame the feller for that."

"And you won't say anything to him about it?"

"Law me, child, I'll never mention it to him; never in the world, so don't give yourself no uneasiness about that."

A chilling rain was falling. Several men, including Ned Royston, were sitting in Bob Talbot's store.

"Yander comes Bill Hempsey," said Talbot, looking out. Ned Royston moved uneasily in his chair.

"Helloa, men!" Bill shouted, as he stepped up into the door and began to stamp the mud off his feet. "Sorter saft outside. Hi, Rob; glad to see you lookin' so well. Hi, Ned, and hi, all hands."

"We're always glad to see you, Bill," Ned spoke up, "fur we know that you allus fetch good humor along with you. Don't make no diffunce how rainy or how dry—no diffunce whether the corn's clean or in the grass, you air allus the same."

"Glad you think so, Ned."

"We all jine him in thinkin' so," said Talbot.

"Much obleeged." He stood leaning against the counter, and, moving his hand carelessly, touched a rusty cheese-knife. "Bob, what do you keep sich a onery-lookin' knife as this, for?"

"Sharp enough to cut cheese with, I reckon," Bob answered.

"Yes, but that's about all. Hand me that whettock over thar and let me whet the point. Blamed if I haven't got to be doin' somethin' all the time. Wall, fellers, I seed suthin' 'tother week while I was down in Knoxville that laid over anything I ever did see before. I went to a theatre. Ever at one, Ned?"

"No, don't b'lieve I was."

"Wall, now, if you've ever been at one you'd know it," Bill replied, industriously whetting the point of the knife. "Why, it knocks a school exhibition sillier than a scorched pup. I never did see sich a show."

"Any hosses in it?" Bob Talbot asked.

"Oh, no, it all tuck place in a house. I'll tell you how it was," (still whetting the knife). "It was playin', regular pertendlike, but it looked mighty natral. It 'pears that a ruther old feller had married a ruther young gal" (he put the whetstone on the counter); "a powerful putty gal, too. Wall, one time when the old feller wa'n t about the house, a young chap that had wanted to marry her a good while before, he come in and got to talkin' to her and the upshot was that he wantod her to run away with him."

"No," said Bob Talbot.

"Yes, sir," continued old Bill, "wanted her to run smack smooth away with him. Wall, she told her husband, but he sorter laughed, he did, and 'lowed that he didn't blame the feller much. But the fun come after this. The old feller—stand up here, Ned, and let me show you. Hang it, stand up; don't pull back like a shyin' hoss. The old feller got him a knife 'bout like this, and he went into a room whar the young feller was. Now, you stand

right thar. He walks in this way, and neither one of them says a word, but stood and looked at each other 'bout like we are doin', but all at once the old feller lifts up the knife this way and—*thar*, you damned *scoundrel!*"

He plunged the knife into Ned Royston's breast —buried the blade in the fellow's bosom, and, as he pulled it out, while Royston lay on the floor, dead, he turned to his terror-stricken friends, and exclaimed:

"He wanted my wife to run away with him, boys! If you wanter hang me, I'll tie the rope. You don't? Then good-bye, and God bless you."

FIVE YEARS.

CHAPTER I.

"You are a pretty looking thing to talk about marrying, Charles. Oh, you are a fine specimen of matrimonial achievement. Marry my daughter! Why, both of you would starve in less than a year. You are eighteen years old and able to support a wife, eh? Eighteen years old, indeed. Why, sir, when I was of that age I no more thought of marrying than I thought of swallowing a tenpenny nail."

"It was probably because you had never loved any one," the young fellow replied, looking down with an embarrassed air.

"Loved any one!" The old gentleman blew his nose. "Loved any one at eighteen? Why, sir, if my father had awakened in the middle of the night and the belief that I was in love with some one had entered his mind he would have hopped out of bed, seized a board and fanned me until I would have thought the tenth of January was the Fourth of July. Loved any one! Why don't you call up the dogs and go out and catch some rabbits? Is that

your top string hanging out of your pocket? Only your handkerchief? Excuse me. My eyesight s not so good as it used to be, but my judgment is a thundering sight better. Love at eighteen? Charles, of course you are always welcome at my house, and I don't want to hurry you off, but, confound it, go home."

"Then you say I shall not marry Ermance?"

"Not at the present writing, whose few lines may find you enjoying the same blessing, Charles. I don't know what may occur in the future, but I am pretty sure of what is happening now."

"Will you let us be engaged, then?"

"Oh, yes, be engaged as much as you please."

"May heaven bless you, sir."

"Now, here, young man, you are not on the stage. The fellow who used to be so good at saying 'May heaven bless you, sir,' is now working on a flatboat."

"But I desire to thank you for your great kindness."

"Yes, that's all right."

"Ermance and I can see each other daily?"

"Well, hardly. You must understand now that I want no love making 'round here. I have a touch of rheumatism and can't stand it. I am somewhat peculiar about my own affairs, for which eccentricity I hope to be pardoned. If you agree to go away

and remain five years, why, at the end of that time you may come back and marry the girl. Do you agree?"

"I suppose I must."

"Well, run along then."

"I don't like for you to talk to me as though I were a child."

"As though you *were* a child, eh? Well, run along, now. Ermance is out in the garden somewhere giggling. Find her, plight your troth and hurry away. At the end of five years come back. Rather severe, probably, but it is the best trade we can make under the circumstances. Don't look exactly right to deal thus in connubial futures—there, now, don't blubber. Why, you are swelling up like a toad. Shut the door. That's right: run along."

The above conversation occurred between Colonel Epimenides Harleyman, a well-known planter and ex-member of the Arkansas senate, and young Charles Wexall, son of a neighboring clergyman. Ermance, the young lady in question, was a half frolicsome, half sedate girl. Strange as it may seem, she was not beautiful. She had a thick mass of yellow hair, so luxuriant that her father often referred to her head as a patch of jute. She was a sudden kind of girl. Sudden in all of her movements; sudden in her exclamations. There seemed to be nothing premeditated about her.

CHAPTER II.

IF THE sound of footsteps could convey an impression of sorrow, any one hearing Charles as he slowly strode along the garden walk must have thought that he was on his way to peer under the rose bush where his last hope was buried. Turning a clump of lilac bushes, he saw Ermance swinging on the limb of an apple tree. Springing lightly to the ground, she ran to meet him.

"Oh, you look so sad!" she exclaimed.

"Ermance, I am sad."

"What did pa say? I've caught a beau," she broke off, plucking a dead branch of rose bush from her skirt.

"What didn't he say? He said everything discouraging. He said that if we want to marry each other we must part for five years."

"Five years!" she exclaimed, opening her eyes.

"Yes, five years," he repeated sorrowfully.

"But how can we part for five years if we are always together. There's a measuring worm on your sleeve. Oh, you are going to get a new coat."

"Ermance, this is serious. Of course we can't

part if we are always together, but we shall not be together. He says that I must go away."

"Go away! He was joking. Oh, your hat is all covered with spider-webs. You must have been up in the garret."

"I am going away, Ermance, and have come to tell you good-bye," he said, drawing her to him. "Will you love me all these years?" Her head sank on his breast. "After all, we are but children. At the end of five years I will come back and claim you. Good-bye." He kissed her.

"Say!" exclaimed the colonel. The lovers started. "I forgot to insert a very necessary clause. You are not to write to each other. There, that's enough. I've got a touch of rheumatism, understand. Good-bye, Charles."

"I am not gone yet, sir."

"Shut the garden gate as you go out, Charles."

"I tell you that I am not gone."

"Take care of yourself." The young man turned away, and the colonel continued: "Never fear, she'll be true to you."

"God bless you, sir."

"Never mind. The fellow who used to say that so well fell out of the stable-loft and killed himself. Ermance, don't blubber. Remember my rheumatism."

CHAPTER III.

FIVE years do not elapse every day, but they elapse every five years. A long dreary time to anxious and waiting hearts, if they be anxious and waiting; but anxiety has been known to wear away and what was once painful waiting sometimes becomes a condition of easy endurance. Charles returned. He had seen much of the world and had collected a few dollars.

"So you have a lover at home, eh?" a miner had said to him.

"Yes, a sort of lover," he replied. "A good enough country girl, easily surprised and somewhat verdant. I used to think a great deal of her, but I was a boy, you know."

"Your old lover will soon be home, won't he, Ermance?" a young lady asked of the girl whose head resembled a patch of jute.

"I suppose so, but why do you refer to him as my lover?"

"Why, I thought that you were engaged!"

"Oh, we were, in a childish sort of way, but I have put that all aside. Father had more sense than both of us."

Charles did not rush over to the colonel's immediately after returning. Ermance, when she heard that he had returned, went away on a visit. The young man felt ashamed of himself. He knew not what excuse to make, but one day, grasping all the courage within reach, he went over to the colonel's, wondering as he went how he could have been so foolish years ago.

"Why, my dear sir!" exclaimed the colonel, "I am glad to see you. You've got enough beard to disguise an ordinary man, but you are not ordinary. Little above fair to middlin', as the cotton men say."

"I am glad to see you again, colonel. How's your rheumatism?"

"It got well immediately after that garden scene."

"Foolish children," replied Charles.

"Well, I should say so," replied the colonel.

"How is, er—Miss Harleyman."

"Quite well, I believe. She went over to Ralston's a few days ago. I sent the buggy after her this morning. I hear her now. Yes, my rheumatism is all right. First rate, for—Ermance, here a minute. Do you know this gentleman?"

"I think so," replied the young lady, advancing without embarrassment, and extending her hand. "How is your health, Mr. Wexall?"

"Never better, thank you."

"Well," said the colonel, "you must excuse me,

as I have business out on the farm. Ermance, our friend must stay to dinner."

An awkward silence followed. Charles knew not what to say nor how to say it; Ermance was embarrassed because she knew not how to express the nothing which she had to say.

"Have you been at home all the time since I saw you last?" Charles asked, after making several efforts to break the silence.

"Oh, no; I spent three years at a seminary."

"Enjoyed yourself pretty well, I suppose?"

"Very much; I soon became interested in my studies."

Another embarrassing silence. "Ermance—I suppose I may call you by that—"

"Of course. We were children together."

"So we were, and foolish children, too, doubtless."

"Yes," she replied, without hesitation. "Father was wiser than we."

The situation was no longer awkward.

"I thought I loved you, Ermance."

"And I thought that I loved you."

"Childish fancy. You don't know what a heavy weight you have lifted from my mind. I don't love you."

"Charles," she replied, her eyes shining with fervent light, "you make me happy. I have long regretted our engagement, and to know that a per-

fect understanding is painless to you, thrills me. Let us be friends. Here's father."

"Ah, hah!" said the old gentleman. "Found that some one else had attended to my business. Are you folks still engaged?"

"No," replied Charles. "We are friends but not lovers."

"Ah, hah!" said the old man, "suppose I had allowed you to marry? Don't you see that a man sometimes has more sense than a boy. Now, you and Ermance are friends. If you had married five years ago, you would now, in all probability, be enemies. Well, Charles, you need feel no hesitancy in remaining to dinner. We generally have something lying around, and you may come over and eat when you feel like it. Why, Ermance, I never saw you so happy."

CHAPTER IV.

NEIGHBORLY visits were kept up between the Harleymans and Wexalls. Charles and Ermance rarely referred to their childish freak of affection, and when they did so, it was merely to congratulate themselves. "How many marriages result in disaster," said Charles, one evening as he and Ermance

walked in the garden. "Five years ago I thought that your father was the cruelest of men; now I think he is one of the wisest."

"Yes, he is undoubtedly a man of fine sense."

"Did he ever say anything, during my absence, to dissuade you from our purpose?"

"No, he always spoke in a way directly opposite. Often, at night, when I went into the library to attend upon his wants—an office which none but I could discharge, he would stroke my hair while I sat on the foot-stool, and tell me of the duties of a wife—how I should always love you, and how noble you were. He never made fun of me, and at first, when I used to sit alone, and—and—weep, he would come to me and tell me how I was loved, and how happy I should be for having won a heart so—so—unchangeable."

"Ermance, this is the spot where we stood five years ago."

"Yes. How chill the air is."

"I think there will be frost to-night," he replied. "By the way, my dear friend, I am going back to the mines. I long to meet those strong and simple fellows. I have become strangely attached to them."

"When are you going?"

"To-morrow."

"Then I know there will be frost to-night."

He caught her in his arms. The yellow hair fell over his shoulder. "Angel, I can not help loving you. I have struggled but in vain. Let us go to your father."

CHAPTER V.

"COME in," said the old gentleman, looking up from a mass of papers. "I tell you, Charles, to make anything out of this cotton business requires close figuring. I ought to have made $12,000 last year, but I didn't—young man, let me tell you that I didn't."

"How much did you make?"

"Only $11,800, Charles. Bad crop year. Sit down, both of you. You remind me of pictures hung in front of a museum."

"Colonel, I have decided to go back to the mines."

"Yes, well, of course. When a man once forms a liking for that kind of life, it is almost impossible to break him of it. Yes, of course."

"But if he were to remain away five years the attachment would be broken, wouldn't it father?" asked Ermance, looking slyly at Charles.

"Well, dog my cats, I don't know," replied the

old gentleman, shoving back his chair. "It would seem so though, eh? Well, blow me up. What put the five years proposition into your head, girl?"

"Nothing, only I thought that—that—"

"Look here, is that the way for friends to do? Put their arms around each other? Well, dog my cats if she hasn't got her jute patch all over his face. Let me get out of here before I have rheumatism so bad I can't hobble."

"Wait, colonel. We are engaged again. It was impossible for us not to love—"

"We couldn't help it, father."

"And," continued Charles, "we have decided to marry at once."

"Of course," said the old gentleman, wiping his eyes. "Of course. Bad cotton year, Charles—of course—well, dog my cats!"

A STRANGE EXPERIENCE.

CHAPTER I.

My name — is not Norval, nor have I ever in any way been associated with the Grampian hills — but my name is Oscar Hockersmith. You will at once perceive that there is nothing in such a name, but if any man has ever passed through an experience similar to the one which I am going to relate, he would do me a great kindness by at once communicating with me.

One day I arrived at Cregmore — a little old town on the upper Arkansas river. Just after I had eaten breakfast at a hotel, the proprietor of the house came to me and said that as I had no baggage I would be compelled to pay in advance.

"Baggage, indeed!" I exclaimed. "Have my trunk sent up, if you please."

"You brought no baggage, sir."

"Then it has not arrived. It will soon be here, for I am sure it arrived. I saw it delivered to an expressman at the railroad station. I have

no money with me. I hope that you appreciate my position, sir."

He doubtfully shook his head and walked away. This annoyed me not a little, and I wondered if the fellow who had taken my trunk had run away with it. I had no check, and I knew that I might have trouble in recovering my property. Just as I turned to go out, an old gentleman whom I suddenly encountered, threw up his hands and exclaimed:

"My God!"

"What is the matter?"

"Oh, sir, if I did not know that my son Norval was dead, I would think you were he. He was killed in the army."

He regarded me closely, and in a quieter tone continued:

"I have never before seen such a resemblance. Same eyes, nose, mouth — everything. Will you please do an old man a favor?"

I replied that I would favor him in any possible way.

"Then come with me to my house. I want my wife to see you."

I told him of the perplexing situation in which I was placed.

"Here, Mr. Bunch!" he exclaimed, calling the proprietor. "Look at this man. Doesn't he look exactly like my son Norval?"

"Exactly, only he is much older."

"Yes; but you must remember that it is more than twenty years since Norval went into the army. He was killed at Antietam. I want you to go home with me. I will stand good for your bill."

"I feel under many obligations to you, old gentleman, for I am really in an embarrassing position. I fear that fellow has stolen my trunk; but if you will go with me to the town officer I will afterward go with you."

He agreed, and we called upon the town marshal, who, after listening to my statement, looked at me suspiciously, and said:

"You didn't come in on any train."

"But, sir, I know I did. I delivered my trunk to a tall negro who walked with a limp, and who, if I remember correctly, had an impediment in his speech. The trunk — and I would know it among a thousand — is a large one, covered with black leather."

"Look here," said the officer, "you came up on a boat, for I saw you when you got off; besides, you could not have come by rail, for as there are several wash-outs above and below here, there has not been a train in for two days."

This statement was insulting, yet I struggled to conceal my resentment. Police officers in small

towns are generally narrow-minded, dogmatic men, and I cared not to dispute him farther than to reaffirm that I came in on the morning train. Then turning to the old gentleman whose name I had learned was Metford, I announced my readiness to accompany him. He had been so absorbed in the contemplation of the resemblance between his son and myself, that he had paid but little attention to the disparity of statements concerning the manner of my arrival.

Mr. Metford lived in an attractive old place, not far from the river. When we entered the gate, a woman came out on the veranda and in a moment, after seeing me, clasped her hands and leaned against a post. As we approached, she uttered a shriek and sprang toward me. The old gentleman, gently taking hold of her, said:

"Come, Mary, don't give way to your feelings. This is—you have not told me your name, sir. Ah, yes," when I had told him, "this is Mr. Oscar Hockersmith. I wanted you to see him on account of the perfect likeness he bears to Norval. Come in, sir," he continued, leading the way. We entered a comfortably furnished room. The old lady could not keep her eyes off me.

"Poor Norval," she repeated over and over again. "Poor child. Oh, sir, if I did not know that he was killed—oh, sir, are you not indeed he?"

"Be quiet, Mary," said the old gentleman. "Don't be excited. Let us make it pleasant here for Mr. Hockersmith, and perhaps he will remain several days with us. Tell us something about yourself, Mr. Hockersmith."

"I was born in Richmond, Va." I replied, "and my parents died when I was quite young. I went into the army and was wounded by a piece of shell at Shiloh. After the war I went home, but found that the uncle with whom I had lived, was reduced almost to a penniless condition. He did not long survive, and there being nothing in Richmond to bind me to the place, I wandered away and have never returned. I have come to this state to look after the land interest of a corporation, and, as soon as my business is completed, I shall go back to St. Louis."

"Until then," said Mrs. Metford, "you must remain at our house. Although I know that you are not our son, yet to see you—" Here the poor woman completely broke down.

"Mary," said the old gentleman, approaching her and stroking her hair, "don't give way to your feeling. I would not have urged him to come, but I knew that if I didn't you would never forgive me. Don't give way, now."

She became calm, but every time she looked at me I could see her lip quiver. "What a pity that

I am not your son," I mused. "Any man, even aside from natural affection, would feel proud of such a mother." I thought of the dead son and of what a splendid home his death had made cheerless, and I almost wished that I had told the old couple that I was really their Norval."

After dinner we were sitting in the parlor when there came a loud knock at the front door. Mr. Metford, who answered the summons, soon returned accompanied by the town marshal. Approaching me, and placing his ungentle hand on my shoulder, the marshal said:

"I want you."

"Want me?" I asked in surprise.

"Yes, I want you."

"What right have you to want me?"

He took out a paper and handed it to me. It was a warrant arresting me on a charge of wilfully and maliciously deceiving the people of Cregmore. It was useless to resist, and although the old gentleman and his wife protested against such an indignity being imposed on a guest of their house, yet by the feelingless ruffian I was led away and lodged in jail.

CHAPTER II.

The next day I was arraigned before a justice of the peace, who requested me to make a brief statement as to how I came to town. I did so, telling him to the best of my recollection. I told him about losing my trunk, and I ventured to take to task a village that would stubbornly shut its eyes and allow the perpetration of such outrages. The town marshal swore that I did not come by rail, that no train had come in since two days before; that I had come on a steamboat, the "Farmer Boy," and that I had no trunk. The captain of the "Farmer Boy," a very gentlemanly looking fellow, arose and astonished me with the following statement:

"Just before leaving Little Rock, day before yesterday, this man, who calls himself Hockersmith, came to me and said that he would like to go up the river as far as Cregmore; that he was employed by a St. Louis land corporation, and that as his baggage had somehow failed to arrive he was without money, but that if I would let him come up as a deck passenger he would, upon reaching this place, get the money from a friend and pay me. It's only a small amount, and I shouldn't have mentioned it

but for the fact that the marshal came down and asked me about the strange fellow."

"What have you to say concerning these statements?" asked the justice.

"Nothing, only that they are not true," I replied. "As I tell you, I came here by rail, arriving yesterday morning."

"But no train arrived yesterday morning."

Then I became indignant. "All right, have it your own way," said I. "One man can not stand up against so many. If I deserve punishment, fine me, and I will go on the rock pile or the convict farm and work it out."

"I don't exactly see how you have violated the law," replied the magistrate, looking at me with almost an expression of pity. "You have not obtained money by false pretenses."

"So far as his passage is concerned," remarked the steamboat man, "I am not anxious. I wouldn't have him punished for that."

The town marshal shifted and twisted himself about in his chair. I could see that he did not like the change which had come over the court.

"Your honor," said he "this man also made false statements to Mr. Bunch, proprietor of the hotel. He obtained board under false pretenses."

I understood him. He would urge charges against me merely to defend his own position.

"Judge," said a voice that I knew. Looking round, I saw Mr. Metford. Everyone waited for him to speak. "I met Mr. Hockersmith at the hotel yesterday morning. On account of the wonderful resemblance which he bears to my son Norval—"

"Yes," replied the judge. "Poor Norval, I saw him buried."

"On account of that resemblance," continued Mr. Metford, "I invited Mr. Hockersmith to accompany me home. He explained his embarrassment, and I told Mr. Bunch that I would stand good for the bill. So, that charge is wiped out."

"That's all very well, gentlemen," exclaimed the town marshal, "but we can't allow fellows to come in this way. I believe that a man should be punished for lying just the same as he ought to be for stealing. That's my ticket."

"I am glad to hear you speak so courageously," rejoined Mr. Metford. "You borrowed $10 of me about two months ago, and vowed that you would return the money within a week. Yet, you have failed to keep your promise. Yes, it is a very good idea to punish men for lying, and now since you have reminded me of your untruthfulness, I think it would be well to act upon your conception of justice. Your honor, make me out a warrant of arrest, please."

For a time the marshal knew not what to say. His face grew red. "You all know me," he replied. "I am not a stranger. I didn't come here and try to beat any of you. I'll pay the $10; don't fret about that. I don't think it is right to hop on a man that's trying to protect the community against fraud. I've got nothing against this fellow, and am willing to see him turned loose."

"I am glad to hear you say so," said Mr. Metford. "You needn't make out the warrant, judge. "Well, Mr. Hockersmith," turning to me, "as there is nothing against you here, you will please accompany me home."

When we went to the house Mrs. Metford's lip trembled. These old people would not hear to my leaving them, so I remained all night. The next morning I awoke with a burning fever. Then I went into a state of delirium and for several weeks knew nothing. When I regained consciousness, my mind was so confused that I could not think. I knew that I talked incoherently, therefore I said but little.

One day while I was sitting in my room, a man was shown up by one of the servants. Mr. and Mrs. Metford were away from home, having gone over to a neighbor's house.

"Don't you know me?" said the man.

"I don't think that I ever saw you before," I replied.

He looked at me and smiled sadly.

"What do you mean," I asked.

"I mean nothing offensive. You know Abe Catham?"

"Never heard of him."

"I am sorry, for I had hoped that you would recognize me."

"How can I recognize you, sir, when this is the first time we have ever met?"

He shook his head and muttered something which sounded to me like "poor fellow." Then he startled me by saying:

"I have been your keeper for years."

"My keeper?"

"Yes; I am connected with the Missouri Insane asylum."

"I don't dispute your position as keeper, but I can assure you that I have never seen the institution. I am a St. Louis land man."

"Let me tell you something which has just come to light. You were wounded at the battle of Antietam."

"Shiloh."

"At Antietam. You and a young Virginian, who, to some extent, resembled you—a man named Hockersmith—fell close to each other. In the report of the killed and wounded, you were put down on the dead list and this man Hockersmith was reported

to be wounded. You had been struck by a piece of shell and was, upon recovery of the wound, found to be hopelessly insane. You went to Richmond, but your supposed relatives spurned you, so I have heard; and, after wandering around, you went to Missouri and was placed in an insane asylum where you remained until a few weeks ago, when you escaped. Your name, I have learned, is Norval Metford and I have come to tell your parents, after satisfying myself that it is you—"

The room began to turn around. The man's voice sounded away off a great distance. He seemed to be shouting, but I could not catch his words. Then some one, dressed in red tight breeches, came in and danced on the back of a chair. A blacksmith led in a horse and began to shoe him. His bellows roared and his anvil rang so loud that I had to put my fingers in my ears. His fire began gradually to darken and, with a sudden puff, it went out, leaving me in total darkness. I groped about but could find no opening in the wall. I cried aloud for a lamp and I cursed the blacksmith for allowing his fire go out. Crawling around on my hands and knees, I found a match. I kissed it. I pressed it to my heart. "Thank God!" I cried, "Thank God that once more there shall be light in the world." Tears streamed from my eyes. I tried to light the match. The tears had dampened it, and

with the feeblest little glow, it died away, leaving me in despair. I heard a voice, low and sweet

"Who are you?" I asked.

A tear fell on my forehead, and clasping my hands, I turned my face upward. "Whose tears are those falling upon me?" I cried. The voice, soft and sweet, sang, but the tears continued to fall. "Oh, can't you give me a lamp!" I cried in agony. Something touched me. It was a lamp, cold and dark, but I hugged it close to me and took care lest my tears should fall upon it. I placed it on the floor, and with my hands clasped around it I lay down and prayed. A feeble little gleam flickered between my fingers. The lamp grew warm. I removed my hands. The little blaze flickered, and then, yes, oh glories of heaven, then—there came a grand burst of light. I lay on a bed. The sun shone into the room. A face, my mother's face, was bowed over me. "Thank God!" she exclaimed, and encircled my neck with her loving arms. My father was there, too, looking upon me.

"There dear," said my mother, "keep very quiet. For weeks you have hovered between life and death."

I closed my eyes and warm recollections poured over me. I could remember it all; how I left that dear home and went into the army.

* * * * * * * * *

I am sitting in my room looking out on the grassy slope where I played so many years ago. There is the old tree where I used to swing in the cool shade. I hear my mother singing in the sitting-room. They say my father laughs again, as he did when I was a boy. Those old people are in a heaven of happiness. The physician says that a few days from now I can resume the business of life. My mother enters and presses her lips upon my brow.

"You haven't the slightest symptoms of fever, Norval, dear," she says.

Angelic woman! She cannot keep her arms from around my neck when she comes near me. Now she goes singing through the hallway. There stands my father at the gate. Something has amused him for he laughs as he did when I was a boy. Yes, my name *is* Norval.

A MARINE FARM HOUSE.

CHAPTER I.

ANY of the old Mississippi river men can recall Gottlieb Langbuerger. He was first known as a cabin boy, industrious and economical, and with discretion better ripened than with most boys of his years. His faithfulness caused his gradual advancement, and at twenty years of age he was placed at the head of a large steamboat. This, though, was not the height of his ambition. He yearned to own a large boat, and be in fact its master. Large boats in those days were often called floating palaces, so unsparing was the means employed in their appointments, and even an industrious man who aspired to the ownership of one could not realize his ambitious dreams in a day. Gottlieb married a Memphis lady, a girl, not unlike himself, of sturdy German stock. Heart and soul, she shared his aspirations and with delight they soon found themselves, in consequence of a fortunate speculation, possessors

of sufficient money with which to build their "floating palace."

At last, Gottlieb was the owner of a fine boat, and with his wife and little girl Ida on board, he proudly plowed the mighty river. During an extremely high stage of water, the highest ever known in that day, he went up the Arkansas as far as Fort Smith, took on a large shipment of cotton, and came down with a sweep. With what feelings of self-congratulation did he stand on deck and survey the people who rushed from their houses to watch the "Schiller" as she passed, and how his wife, knowing so well his feelings, shared them. They had passed Little Rock and entered the low and sandy district, when a dark night came on.

"Don't you think we'd better tie up till morning?" asked Gottleib of the pilot.

"Not at all necessary. I know the river like a book."

"Yes, but remember that the water is higher than you ever saw it before."

"Who says it is?" the pilot answered rather sharply, for some river men are proud of their record in this way and dislike the very mention of recent waters being higher than any they have seen in the past.

"Oh, I don't know particularly who says it is, but from what I can gather here and there, the river has passed her highest mark of former years."

"You are doubtless good authority on the Mississippi, captain, but I don't think you are very well acquainted with the Arkansas."

"All right, go ahead."

The night grew darker and darker and a fog crept along the water and rose into the air. Not a light could be seen along the shore.

"Wish I had taken his advice," mused the pilot. "Hanged if I thought that a few drinks would make me so obstinate. To tell the God's truth, I don't know where I am. The river must have risen wonderfully for the whole country seems to be overflowed. I'd land but am afraid." He strained his eyes and "rummaged" his recollection. Gottlieb, with an anxious face, came into the pilot-house.

"Where are we, Mr. Quirmer?"

"Somewhat near the Giles place, but to tell you the truth, I don't know exactly where. Wish I had taken your advice, for the whole country is overflowed."

"I wish you had. Some of the passengers have gone to bed. Think I'd better have them aroused."

He turned to go, and had taken hold of the door knob, when the boat struck.

"Aground, by all the gods that ever flew over water!" exclaimed the pilot.

The captain's face was as pale as a ghost. Still holding the door knob, he looked at the pilot and said:

"You have ruined me."

"Don't think that, captain. She struck very easily, and I think that by unloading a few bales of cotton we can shove her off."

Gottlieb, without replying, went below. The grounding had been so easy that the passengers were not in the least frightened, but stood about and joked. One man asked the captain why he didn't call his boat the "Plow Boy," and another man, a great wag and self-appointed wit, said:

"Say, cap'n, why don't you call her the 'Wheelbarrow?'"

"Because," Gottlieb replied, "she will make more than one track before she gets out of here."

All night they worked without avail. Morning dawned upon a scene of dreary waste. The "Schiller" was in a little field between two strips of wood. Hope was soon abandoned, for the water was falling rapidly. The pilot kept out of the captain's way, but he need not have done so, for the poor fellow's face showed sadness, instead of anger. When the crew had been called to be paid off and dismissed, the captain said, "Boys, I hate to put you off here, but it can't be helped. This field, I am told, was never overflowed before, and it is useless to expect a rise in the river. I have made arrangements to have this cotton hauled away. The passengers will also receive transportation. Where is Mr. Quirmer?"

"Here I am, sir."

"Why don't you come up and get your money?"

"Because, sir, I don't deserve it."

"Nonsense. Do you suppose I think you grounded this boat purposely?"

"No; but I am the cause of its being here."

"Yes; and I am the cause of its being built."

"You said that I had ruined you."

"Did I? Well, it was because I was vexed at the time."

"I have never seen such another man as you are, captain. Many a man would not only have cursed me, but would almost wiped me from the face of the earth."

"But that would not wipe the boat from the face of the earth," the captain replied with a sad smile.

"What are you going to do, captain?"

"Stay here."

"In hopes of a rise?"

"I don't dare to hope, but this boat shall be my home."

"Tell me, if I am worthy to be told, where do you get such strength? How can you bear up so well under such misfortune?"

"Do you see that woman?" pointing to his wife who stood a short distance away, leaning on a railing and looking out over the field. "I get my strength from her."

CHAPTER II.

When the river receded into its proper channel, the "Schiller" was ten miles from navigable water. Gottlieb purchased the little field on which his boat had stuck, together with a small tract of adjoining land and decided to raise cotton and corn. He hired a party of men and dug under the "Schiller" until she had been sunken into a large excavation. Then at the cost of great labor and perseverence he had water hauled in barrels and poured into the excavation. Again the magnificent steamer was afloat, but had to content herself within only a few inches of play. One of the crew, an engineer, had been retained, and nearly every evening after his work in the field was done for the day he would raise steam and set the ponderous machinery in motion. Mrs. Langbuerger soon became interested in raising chickens, and every night she carefully housed her brood on board. In addition to agriculture, Gottlieb established a school. He experienced no trouble in procuring scholars, for every boy and girl in the neighborhood were charmed with the idea of going to school on a boat. The captain not only taught the ordinary branches, but instructed the boys in the

art of river navigation, a highly interesting feature, for nearly every boy who lives near a navigable river entertains an aspiring hope that he will one day be a steamboat man. Among the scholars was a bright boy, Henry Rusworm. The captain conceived such friendship for the lad, partly due to the fact that he was an orphan, that he adopted the child. There was, though, a tender affection awaiting the lad, for as the years crept along, little Ida, Gottlieb's daughter, learned to love him. Her love was not ill-bestowed, for Henry worshiped her with that intense ardor which steals into a boy's life at an early age.

The years kept rolling on, as indeed they should, for no man of sense could have expected a halt of time simply because a steamboat had run aground. The "Schiller" was kept in excellent repair. Every year she was freshly painted, and every unsound piece of wood was replaced with befitting material.

One Sunday when the captain and his wife had gone to church, Ida went up into the pilot-house where Henry sat at the wheel. They had both arrived at the shy age, and, at times, through very excess of love, avoided each other.

"I didn't know you were here," said Ida blushing.

"If you had known it you wouldn't have come up, would you?"

"Yes, I would have come, but I wouldn't have come so soon."

"You would have come sooner if you had thought Web Jones had been here," meaning a boy whom Henry knew she disliked.

"No, I wouldn't either."

"You like him better than anybody, anyway."

"You know I don't," her eyes beamed with tenderness.

"Then, whom do you like better?"

"Somebody. Law, look at that bird on the jack staff."

"Never mind the bird."

"He's gone now."

"Are you quite sure you saw a bird?"

"Why shouldn't I be?"

"I don't know. I see a bird any time when I look at you."

"I'm not a bird. I can't fiy."

"Yes you can. You have. You have flown into my soul and fluttered against my heart." She looked down and toyed with a tassel that hung from a rich cord around her waist. Don't you know that I worship you?"

"No, for you avoid me."

"You avoid me."

"Don't you know why?"

"Yes," and he caught her in his arms.

What a glorious day it was for them. How many little words of sweet nothingness passed between

them as they sat in the pilot house, looking out over the corn stalks that shook their silks and silvery tassels in the stirring air.

When Gottlieb returned at evening, and came up into the pilot house where Henry sat in his soul's own twilight, lost in a reverie of sweet content, he touched the young man, who was unconscious of his approach, and said:

"Keeping her well in the channel, are you, my boy?"

"Yes," he replied, humoring the joke.

"Look out for snags. I have had sufficient confidence in you to promote you to this position of trust, so keep a sharp lookout."

"I shall, captain."

"As the old maid at the quilting said, 'Why so pensive.'"

"Nothing."

"Yes, there is something. Come, out with it, my boy."

"My boy," again. The young man looked earnestly into the captain's eyes, but saw no glow of unusual tenderness. Discouraged, foolish fellow, thinking that the captain should have divined his heart's secret, he again made an evasive reply.

"Come, Henry, I see that something is indeed the matter with you. Tell me what it is."

"Can't you see?"

"No; how can I?"

"Have you been so unobservant all these years?"

"What do you mean, lad? You are actually mysterious."

"Oh, sir, if I am presumptuous, forgive me. You took me when I was homeless and gave me a welcome full of kindness. You have educated me—"

"And taught you to be a pilot."

"Yes, taught me everything I know, and it grieves me to think that I have taken advantage of your kindness."

"How?"

"By loving Ida."

"You are a foolish boy. And is this the weight that oppresses you? Why, Henry, when she was a little girl, in flowing night-gown, kneeling by her mother at night, she used to mention your name in her prayers. She still prays for you." Henry caught the captain's hand.

CHAPTER III.

A heavy rain had been falling all day, and reports from above spoke of high water coming down. Although Gottlieb had long since lost all hope of

ever again steaming down the river on the "Schiller," for high banks had formed between his farm and the river, yet he always read with interest accounts of high water. A dark night set in and the rainfall increased in volume. The old engineer raised steam, as usual, and the bow of the "Schiller" pressed against the edge of her narrow confines. Henry took his accustomed place at the wheel. "I never heard such a rain," he mused. "Good thing we brought the horses aboard."

At a late hour he still sat in the pilot house. The machinery was slowly working. "Old Bob," he mused, "must be industrious to-night, but he always works his engine when the weather's bad."

The captain came up. "You'd better turn in, Henry; it's getting late. Great Lord! What was that?"

The boat had moved. The rain fell in such volume that no rush of water could be heard. Henry's eyes stood out in a wild stare. The boat moved, careened to one side, steadied herself and shot forward.

"Give me the wheel, give her to me!" exclaimed the captain.

"Get away, captain, you are too much excited. I know where we are; going through the Welling field. The water naturally turns to the right here, for the land is low." Lightning flashed. "Don't you see?"

"God bless the boy."

"Bless us all," Henry replied. Mrs. Langbuerger and Ida rushed into the pilot house.

"Now we turn into Bobson's narrow field," he said, as another flash of lightning illuminated the yellow sheet of water.

"Where can we get into the river, Henry?"

"We go over Jackson's field into Cove creek, and then on to the river. I've planned the route many a time, and have walked over it a hundred times."

"Fifteen years since the 'Schiller' came up the river," the captain said.

"Here we are," as another flash of lightning lit up with a glare the mighty, rushing river. For a time no one spoke. Morning slowly advanced, and when the light was sufficient, the "Schiller" was landed. A crew was soon formed.

While the captain was standing on the shore a man approached him and said:

"You don't remember me, do you?"

"Why, Quirmer, how are you?"

"You don't know how glad I am that you are again afloat."

"Go aboard. Henry doesn't know the river, and I want you to teach him. In other words, take your old place. There, don't mention it, but go aboard, for we are going to start in a few minutes.

That night Henry and Ida were married.

"What boat is that?" asked a man at Helena the other day.

"That's the 'Schiller,' built by old man Langbuerger. Henry Rusworm is the captain now, but the old man is so full of life that he goes out every trip."

THE RADISH KING.

THE other evening, during a conversation on insanity, its causes and sensations, Col. Weekley said:

"I was once insane, and I often muse over my experience. There are, of course, many kinds of insanity. Some mental disorders take place so gradually that even the closest companions of the victim are at a loss to remember when the trouble began. It must have been this way in my case. One evening, after an oppressively warm day, a day when I experienced more fatigue from the heat than ever before or since, I sat on my porch fanning myself. 'This arm that is now in motion,' I mused, 'must one of these days be dust. I wonder how long will the time be. There is a spot where the grass doubtless grows that will one day be opened to receive my body—my body that is now alive. The man is probably now living who will part the grass and dig my grave. There are pebbles under the sod—pebbles there now, that are waiting to be disturbed by the spade that lifts the clay from my

grave. I don't see how I can die. I see how easy, how necessary, it is for others to die, but when it comes to me, I can not see the use. I wonder if I am actually compelled to die. Wonder if there won't be an exception to this great rule. I believe that death was intended for others but that I can not die.' Then I mused upon the evidence I had of immortality. I could do things that other people could not accomplish. I had gone through battle after battle, and though bullets sang and struck around me thick as hail yet I remained uninjured. I had passed through epidemics of yellow fever. People all around me were stricken as if by an avenging hand, yet I passed through the terrible scenes, coming out, it seemed, all the healthier for my experience. My idea gained strength as I mused, and I was convinced that I should live forever. It all seemed so plain, that I thought of telling my wife, but then I thought how bad it must make her feel to know that she must soon pass away.

"The next morning, while I walked in the garden, the sun came up in cloudless splendor, and I again fell to musing. 'I am a mere worm,' I thought. 'This great sun is immortal, not I. But I may be the sun. Perhaps it is a part of me. I feel its warmth, and no matter how fast I run, or which way I turn, it follows me. No, this

can not be, for it follows all men alike. Yes, I am to die like other men, and I believe that it is my duty to make the most of life; to make money, and enjoy myself, and to educate my children.' A great load of oppressive concern seemed to be lifted from my mind. I wanted to be rich, and I began to study over an imaginary list of enterprises. At last I hit upon radishes. People must have radishes. They should be in every store. They could be dried and sold in winter. I would plant fifty acres with radish seed, and people all over the country would refer to me as the 'radish king.' I would form a radish syndicate, and buy up all the radishes, and travel around and be admired. I hastened to the house to tell my wife that she was soon to be a radish queen. At the breakfast-table I said:

"'Julia, how would you like to be a radish queen?'

"'A what?' she exclaimed.

"I explained my plan of acquiring great wealth, and during the recital she acted so curiously that I was alarmed. I feared that she was losing her mind. Finally she seemed to understand. She agreed with me, but told me not to say anything more about it. After breakfast I saw her talking earnestly with her father, and I knew that she was explaining to the old gentleman how she intended to

pay his debts when I became known as the radish king. The old man approached me with much concern, and told me that I needed rest, and that I must not think of business. He was old and sadly worried, and I promised him that I would not think of business. Pretty soon I went out to inspect my radish kingdom. Looking around, I saw the old man following me. I humored his whim by paying no attention to him. From the field I went to the village. I approached a prominent citizen who had always been my friend, and told him how I intended to become rich. He seemed grieved, and I saw at once that he was contemplating the same enterprise. It seemed mean that he should take advantage of me, and I told him so. He tried to explain, but he made me so mad that I would have struck him if my father-in-law hadn't come up and separated us. I tried to calm myself, but could not. Those who had been my friends proved to be my enemies, and I was determined to be avenged, but before I could execute my will I was seized by several men. My father-in-law did not attempt to rescue me, and I hated him. I was taken to jail. My wife came to see me, but she did not try to have me released. I demanded a trial, but no lawyer would defend me. Then I realized that the entire community was against me. I became so mad that my anger seemed to hang over me like a dark cloud. It pressed me

to the floor and held me there. Men came after a long time and took me away, I thought to the penitentiary. One day a cat came into my cell, and I tried to bite it. She made the hair fly, but I killed her. I don't know how long I remained here, but one morning the sun rose and shone in at me through the window. It seemed to be the first time that I had seen the great luminary for months. A mist cleared before my eyes. My brain began to work, and suddenly I realized that I had been insane. I called the keeper, and when he saw me he exclaimed, 'Thank God!' and grasped my hand. I was not long in putting on another suit of clothes and turning my face toward home. A physician said that I was cured, and everybody seemed bright and happy at my recovery. I boarded a train with a gentleman, and went home. My wife fainted when she saw me and learned that I had recovered my mind. I asked for my little children, and two big boys and a young lady came foward and greeted me. I had been in the asylum twelve years."

BROUGHT THE MONEY.

CHAPTER I.

People who lived in Nashville, Tenn., in 1876, have surely not forgotten Anzeli Botenio, the artist. He had an obscure room, a studio, he termed it, reached by an alley leading off from a street not noted for its respectability. As his name implies he was of Italian extraction; indeed, he claimed to have been educated in Florence, but this his acquaintances seemed to doubt, not that they had ever detected him in an untruth, but because, I am inclined to believe, his pronunciation was strikingly American. If his worship of art could have been crystalized into art itself he would have become famous; but, somehow, I am not sufficiently schooled to tell why, he lacked the simple yet divine touch of greatness. Some of his pictures were beautiful, surely; but the art critics—and I fancy that they knew more of ordinary whitewash than of fine paint—criticised them with uncouth severity. I have never seen a man possessed of a more lovable disposition. Neither hunger nor that

which is worse to a sensitive soul, disappointment, tended to throw the melancholy of twilight where his sunshine of bright hope had played. "Ah," he would sometimes say, "perfect love must finally result in perfect execution. Yes, the moonlight in that picture must be unnatural. I will go out to-night, study nature and remedy the defect."

One night at a picture sale Anzeli was introduced to one of the handsomest young women of the south, Miss Laura Blythe, niece of old General A. T. Patterson. Laura lived with her uncle, her parents having died when she was a child; and, as the old fellow had no children, it was said that she would inherit his property. Anzeli thought not of this when he stood enthralled by her presence. At once, and before he could realize it, he gave her the love which his soul had warmly treasured to bestow upon an ideal of its own creation. He had often said, in conversation with a friend, that he did not expect ever to love a human being. "I know that I am foolish," he admitted, "but I can not love a woman unless she is perfectly beautiful, more beautiful than I fancy any human being can be. Her face must not bear the slightest blemish; there must not be the mistake of a single line; but, of course, I shall never meet her."

When his heart ceased fluttering and when his eye became steadier he knew that he had met her.

She was struck with him, for when her uncle called

her she lingered, with half-blushing dalliance, as though hesitating to say something which she feared would be inappropriate. They met again the night following and he walked home with her, though, had his eye been more observant of surroundings, he might have seen that the old general approved not of his attention to the young woman. After this they met often, though not at the general's house. Once at the house of a convenient friend he sat pressing her beautiful head to his bosom.

"You know that I am wretchedly poor." he said.

"Yes, Anzeli."

"That I haven't money enough to furnish a house."

"Oh, don't speak of that."

"If it is painful to you, I will not."

"It is only painful to me because it seems painful to you," she replied. "I care for nothing but your love. I would rather starve with you than feast with any other mortal."

He moved uneasily. "Do you doubt me?" she asked.

"I cannot doubt you, but—"

"But what, love?"

"Oh, it seems that those words have been spoken so often before."

"Perhaps, but never before by me," she said, putting her arms around his neck.

"But are you so different from all other women? Is a beautiful face after all but the light thrown from a beautiful soul?"

"Now you are trying to flatter me again, Anzeli."

"No, it would be impossible to flatter you. Flattery is an exaggeration, but can the most gifted flatterer exaggerate the brightness of the sun?"

"There you go," she joyously replied. "In defending yourself you cap the climax of flattery; but never mind, dear, you shall see. We can rent a small house, and even though the walls and the floors may be bare, a vine can grow at the door."

"Yes, in the summer," he replied, "but when winter comes will not the vine die?"

"No," she said. "A thousand times no. The summer of love knows not the coming of winter; and the warm zone of devoted hearts will always keep the vine alive."

"Laura, you are an angel, and I cannot help but feel that what you say is true."

"Ah, but you must not struggle against such a fond conviction."

"Its very fondness is its adverse argument," he responded. "Your uncle has declared that if you become the wife of a daubing beggar you shall never enter his house again."

"But," she laughingly replied, "it seems that these words have been spoken so often before.

There, now, I didn't say that to make you muse. It shall make no difference to me even if I don't go into the house again. Let him leave his money to some one else. I don't want it."

"Will you not think of it when you look at the bare walls?"

"No, for then I can turn to the vine. Now, don't muse again. Let me tell you, once for all, Anzeli, that I have faith in your coming success. Of course this does not influence my love, but I cannot help but believe, cannot help but know that one of these days great men will come and buy your pictures. Let us be happy now. Let not a worrying thought, always so full of mischief, weave shadows for our future."

"Laura, you are, in every way, superior to me."

"How you do beckon to the shadows, Anzeli."

"You are more philosophical than I am, beautiful girl."

"Will the shadows not come after such pleading?" she mischievously asked.

"No," he said, smiling. "You have driven them away."

CHAPTER II.

A beautiful woman stood in the door of a small house in an unattractive part of the city. It was summer and the tendrils of a vine waved above her head. There was no carpet in the room, but the walls were adorned with paintings without frames. A man came and kissed the woman.

"Anzeli, you look tired."

"I am tired—sick and tired."

"Has anything gone wrong?"

"Everything."

"What?"

"Oh, Anderson has refused to take the landscape which he pretended to admire so much and which he said he would pay me for to-day."

"What explanation did he make?"

"He said that he didn't want a picture that had been ridiculed by the newspapers. I was so anxious for him to take it. Just think, we could have bought a carpet for this room."

"And could have gotten some better chairs than these," she sadly replied.

"Yes, but never mind, love. The picture I am working on now will command attention; I just know

it will. Several cows are standing in a brook and you can almost fancy that you see the minnows playing about their hoofs. Just bear with me a little longer."

She sat down and, with that motion so indescribable, but so expressixe of a thoroughly disconsolate state of mind, crossed her hands.

"I feel that I am improving all the time," he continued. "Each day I get nearer and nearer to a wonderful vision which I shall one day see clearly. Sometimes I feel that it is about to break upon my sight, but then a mist arises and shuts it entirely out. One of these days the mist will not arise, and then, when people come to look at a picture they will say, 'This is a glimpse of paradise.' Don't be disheartened, Laura, but bear with me a little longer."

She sprang to her feet and threw her arms around his neck. "Heaven lingers with me while I wait with you," she said. "You are so good and so gentle that I reproach myself when—"

"When you do what, dear?"

"When I look about the room and wish that it were furnished better. Some people are so cruel."

"Has anyone been cruel to you? Has anyone written you another anonymous letter, telling you how much better you could have done?"

"Yes, but I tore it to pieces."

"After reading it?" he asked.

"Oh, yes; I could not help reading it."

"What did the writer say?"

"Something that would sting a woman, though she were an angel."

"What?"

"That if more than three visitors were to call upon us at once, someone would have to stand or sit on the floor."

"None but a wretch could have written such a letter, Laura. Don't let it worry you."

"The actual deprivations enforced by poverty are easy enough to bear, but the humility of knowing that scantiness of necessary furniture places one under the jeering espionage of—of—"

"There, now, Laura, you must not give way to your feelings. I know that you are fitted intellectually to be the wife of a great man, that you are as strong mentally as you are beautiful physically, but repose faith in me just a little longer."

"Anzeli," she said, as she turned to a small looking-glass and began to arrange her beautiful hair, "to be unhappy with you would argue strangely against the immortality of the soul. Speaking of the soul reminds me of the body," she cheerfully added. "Come, supper is ready."

Time moved slowly and darkly, like a lengthening shadow. One morning, while looking over a newspaper printed in a distant city, Laura found

the following: "The once beautiful Laura Blythe, the pride of southern society, is now the wife of an Italian fanatic who imagines that he can paint pictures. It is said that he has dragged her down to a poverty and wretchedness that is fast breaking her heart." She threw the paper down and burst into tears. Anzeli came home, almost joyous in the entertainment of some new prospect, but she shuddered and turned away from him.

"Are you ill?"

"I am everything that is miserable," she replied.

"Has anything new gone wrong?" he asked.

"Is wretchedness always tiptoeing in the expectancy of some new pang?"

He muttered something about the bright vision which he knew must soon be clearly presented to him. She did not reply, and during a long and dreary evening, they remained silent. The leaves on the vine at the door were turning yellow.

"Anzeli," she said, several days later, "did Jackson take the picture?"

"No," he replied.

"Of course not. It is time we were putting aside some of our foolishness."

"Foolishness?" he gasped.

"Yes, foolishness. I must have some money."

"You shall have it, Laura. The vision—"

"Never mind the vision, Anzeli. There have

been too many visions and not enough substances in this hovel. You can surely find some sort of employment. Art may be ennobling, but it is disgraceful to live this way."

"What am I to do?" he sadly replied. "I know nothing of the business affairs of men. I can do nothing but paint."

"Paint!" she repeated. He looked up quickly, and then seemed to be endeavoring to swallow something.

"You can very easily turn your hand to something else," she said.

"You don't love me, Laura."

"What, don't love you simply because I believe that you are capable of making a living! Don't love you because I am human being enough to wish for something better than this wretched room! You delight in calling me an angel, but do angels seek a dark and wretched abode? Be sensible, Anzeli, I must have money."

"I will bring you some money," he replied. "I have several pictures that I can sell."

The next night when he came home, she met him at the door and asked him if he had brought the money.

"I did not succeed in selling the pictures."

"I knew it."

"But I will bring you some money to-morrow night."

"The old story, Anzeli."

"I will bring you some money to-morrow night," he repeated.

A frost had fallen. The leaves on the vine at the door were black.

It was late when he came home the next night. She was sitting with her arms resting on a table, and did not look up when he entered. Without speaking, he advanced, and from a small bag emptied a pile of gold upon the table. She sprang to her feet and threw her arms around his neck. "Oh, Anzeli," she cried, "I may have been petulant, but I have never lost faith in you. Won't you forgive me?"

"I have brought the money."

"Yes, dear. Oh, I knew that they could not much longer refuse to buy your pictures. I am so glad now that you did not give up your noble profession. How many pictures did you sell?"

"I have brought the money," he solemnly repeated. She kissed him, and with a flutter of joy sat down and fondled the gold. "I will buy ever so many things," she mused. "Let me see how much we have. Three hundred dollars," she exclaimed, when she had counted the money. "Anzeli! Where did he go? You will find your supper on the table," she called. "Three hundred dollars," she repeated, again fondling the gold. "The wretch who

has been sending anonymous letters should take a peep into my house next week. What a dear, patient man Anzeli is. I will go to him. Why, he hasn't eaten a bite," she said, when she had gone into the kitchen. She opened the back door and called him. No answer. She went around to the front door and called. A dead vine fell at her feet. She called again and again. "He has gone back to work," she said, but her hand shook when she returned to the sitting room and began to fondle the gold. The night wore away. She had not slept. Her eyes were swollen. Some one knocked at the door. She opened it and an excited man exclaimed: "Great God, madam, a man is hanging from a tree in your back yard!"

That morning the Nashville *American* contained the following paragraph: "Late last night the store of J. B. Hillitt, on Cherry street, was robbed of $300 in gold."

ZOZI.

AMONG the effects of T. R. Ludds, whose death was recently announced by the Chicago newspapers, was found a manuscript written by a young woman. It was entitled "A Confession," and attached to it was the following note in the handwriting of Mr. Ludds:

"This was sent to me by the writer thereof, Laura Brizman, who, a few years ago, held sway as an acknowledged beauty; and, lest some one may wonder how I came possessed of this confession, let me say that Laura Brizman had promised to be my wife."

I don't ask for sympathy — I ask for nothing except an unprejudiced reading of these lines, and yet I don't see how I can hope even for so much consideration. There may come a time when to some extent I shall be vindicated; and, with this in view, I shall set down, in minute detail, the strange experience which befell me.

One afternoon, while returning home on a suburban train after a day of shopping, a most peculiar feeling suddenly came over me. For a few moments my mind seemed to be in a strange tumble, falling or turning over and over, and during the time my heart fluttered with fright; but suddenly I became calm, and out of that whirlwind of emotion came the conviction that I had lived hundreds of years ago. We all have felt this impression, and I had felt it many times before; and, after a moment's perplexity, had dismissed it as a mental phenomenon that never could be understood; but this time it was more than an impression — indeed, it was clarified into a defined recollection — and I remembered the following incidents of a former life: It must have been at least three hundred years ago when I lived in Florence. My father, Lopelo Denzi, was a rich merchant, and I an only child. I could get but fitful glimpses of my childhood; but I well remembered the day I was fifteen, when I was given as a bride to Antonio Moraso. How thrillingly this came up and took possession of me that afternoon, and how I attempted to reason with myself. I tried to calm myself with a strong view of the present — that I was a Yankee girl, sitting in a railway train, looking out on an Illinois prairie — but the soft air and the delicate perfume of an

Italian garden came and made my senses swim. And then, the recollection of my marriage was so strong that reason turned an ardent advocate, and urged me to recall the details of my happy wedding.

Antonio Moraso! How brave and handsome he was — with curling hair and eyes of softest luster. I could recall every feature of his face, and so distinctly, on a sudden, did I remember, or rather hear again, the music of his voice, that I was thrilled — thrilled back into the rushing age of the present. Again did I argue with myself, striving to make myself believe that I had been asleep; but as I sat looking out over a Dutchman's cabbage patch, the recollection of my life in Florence came back with heightened color, and now, no longer attempting to hold my mind in restraint, I loosened it and let it fly back to the narrow streets of Dante's town.

A bride at fifteen; but with what a happy willingness! I loved Antonio with a passion that could not exist in this cold, commercial age. The wedding eve, with its knightly company! How its music and its incense came back to me. Then came a haze through which I could scarcely see, and then Antonio and I were living in a charming old house. Most of all, I remember one evening; we were sitting in the garden.

"Zozi," said he, with his arm fondly about me, "is it not a cruel fate that at some time death will separate us?"

"Oh, don't speak of that, love," I implored.

"It was on my mind," he went on, drawing me closer to him, "but I believe that we shall live again; I do not mean in heaven, but on this earth. Hundreds of years from now we may meet and love again. I may come as a rude plow-boy, and you may be rich and a maid of honor at court; but I shall woo you, and you will hearken, for you will know that you were mine 'in ages gone.'"

I remembered this as well as though but a day had passed; but I could not recall what immediately followed; indeed, a patch of darkness fell, and when the light came again we were on shipboard with our little boy. A fierce storm was raging; the passengers were terrified. Antonio held me and my child clasped in his arms; and then came a sudden darkness — a chill and gurgling darkness — and all was over.

By this time the train had stopped at the suburban station near which I lived, and I got off. My head was throbbing as though waves were beating against it, and I went to my room and lay down. "I must have been dreaming," I persuasively mused; but no, I could not put it aside as the hazy

vision of a dream; it was the successive flashes of vivid recollections. I dozed off to sleep and dreamed, but of some commonplace and foolish thing. My mother awoke me.

"Laura, aren't you coming to dinner?"

"Did you ever think of calling me Zozi?" I asked.

"Think of calling you what! Zozi! Who ever heard of such a name, and what could have put that notion into your head, my child?"

"Oh, I didn't know but that at some time—before I was born—you thought of calling me Zozi."

"What an idea. We thought of naming you Susan, after my aunt."

"And you never even thought of the name Zozi."

"Of course not; never even heard of such a name; and, even if it had been suggested, we never would have thought of giving it to you."

That evening I went to the house of a neighbor to see his daughter formally presented to society. I did not arrive until rather late, and when I did appear in the drawing-room, the pet of that night's social whim, the tender-looking daughter of an uncouth old man, ran up and heaped an ecstatic welcome upon me.

"Oh, have you ever met Professor Marsh?" she asked.

"No; what is he professor of?"

"Music—brilliant performer on the piano," and then in a whisper she added: "That's the reason papa invited him; isn't here altogether as a social equal, you know. But he does play charmingly. Wait till he gets through."

The professor had just begun a wild dash down an operatic precipice; and we stood waiting. The wild dash ceased and the professor turned and bowed to his admirers.

"Why, what's the matter?" cried the girl catching me.

"Nothing. Let me sit down a moment."

She led me to a chair, and the applause which followed the music covered our words and drew attention from our actions.

"There's a doctor here somewhere," said the girl. "Let me call him."

"No; I was simply dizzy for a moment. It's not unusual with me. Oh, don't be alarmed. It's really nothing."

But it was something; it was Antonio Moraso. And he looked at me with a soul-reading eye. My heart fluttered, and in my agitation I wondered if he knew me. But a moment's reason told me that he did not—persuaded me that I had dreamed and that this man merely chanced to figure fittingly in the vision. A moment later he was introduced to me. We strolled about the rooms, into the conservatory,

and sat on a rustic seat under an oleander; we seemed to be prompted by one impulse as we turned toward the shrubbery—the memory of one sweet evening in an Italian garden. The professor sat for a moment with his hand pressed against his forehead, and then he turned to me. Passion beamed in his eyes. Suddenly I was thrilled to my very soul. He had whispered the name "Zozi."

"And you know me?" I said.

"Yes, my angel."

A cold sense of propriety struck me—it came like the slap of a wet hand.

"Don't—don't talk that way; some one might hear," I whispered.

"Yes," he replied, nodding in approval of my caution; and then he asked: "When did those sweet memories begin to float in upon your mind?"

"Not until to-day," I answered.

"Wonderful. This afternoon about 3 o'clock?" he asked.

"Yes," I replied, trembling.

He was silent for a time, and he pressed his hand against his forehead. "All things have ceased to be astonishing," he said, seeming to recall his mind from a strange wandering, "and I am now prepared for all sorts of spiritual manifestations; and I do believe that if a dead man should rise up and confront me I should not regard it as out of the province

of reasonable and expected occurrence. Zozi, what a school I have gone through since 3 o'clock this afternoon. I was sitting in a barber shop, waiting for my turn, when my mind was suddenly darkened by a strange confusion; and out of the darkness flashed rays of light, and in the light were strange but sweetest memories. I thought I must have dreamed, but no, I had not dozed. I do not come as a plough-boy, precious," he added, smiling.

The hostess came up and drew us away, and soon the "professor" had drowned the low voices of the past with a fierce piano storm of the present. We had that night no chance for further conversation, but just before parting he asked me if he might call the next day.

"Yes," I answered. "come in the afternoon. Do you know where I live?"

"Oh, I can find the way. Good-night," he said aloud, and whispered, "Angel."

I had gone to bed and was just dozing off to sleep when a moral self-questioning came with sudden force and aroused me to full consciousness. Had I acted discreetly in granting that man, a stranger, from society's point of view, the privilege of such an intimacy? But, then, how light were all customs of the frivolous and heartless present when weighed against the endearments of a holy past. That man had been my husband, and with me had shared the love of a

beautiful boy, and now should I question his moral right to lay a fond claim to me? I did not see how I could; and yet I knew that society would accept of no explanation—in fact, could comprehend no such relationship. I wondered if it were wise to tell my mother, and instantly I felt that it would not be, for she, with her practical mind, could not even fancy a plausible pretext for so outrageous a presumption. Indeed, I felt that no one, no matter how much given to the indulgence of strange theories, could believe my story, and, therefore, I was resolved to keep it to myself. But did I really love this man, Marsh? Was I not engaged to a well-known man, and had I not told him that I was giving him the firstlings of my heart's devotion? But I had, under an old, old moon, in the sweet time of an ancient yesterday, worshiped Antonio, and this man was Antonio come back to me. He was not so handsome as of old, but I put this off on the ground of a fond blindness to all blemish which must have existed in that long time ago when women were supposed to feel but not to reason.

The professor came the next afternoon, and, when I heard his soft and thrilling words I knew that I was his slave. I felt that, regardless of recent obligations which I with happiness had taken upon myself, it was my duty to follow him and to do his bidding.

I sat beside him on a sofa. "My own Zozi, do you love me with that old, old-time softness and beautiful devotion born of a redolent garden?"

"I worship you," I answered.

"Then shall our old happiness be resurrected."

"Love," I asked, looking into his eyes, "what was the name of our boy? I can not recall it."

"Alva," he answered, and I suddenly remembered that Alva was the little one's name.

We sat in a love-buoyant silence; I against his heart, his lips pressed to mine.

"Will you go with me?" he asked.

"If you will marry me again we will take up our happiness where we laid it down so long ago," I answered.

"But we *are* married, precious—were married in ages gone; ours was one of the matches made in heaven."

"Yes, but we were Italians then, and now we are Americans and must be married under the American law."

"That cannot be, Zozi; the law will prevent it; I *am* married under that law—my wife is—don't draw away from me! Remember that we did not recall our ancient marriage and the happiness that followed until yesterday. Don't turn away as if I had married in violation of a vow made to you."

He pressed me to him again; I could not resist;

he was mine—mine by a decree rendered when the church was younger and purer—when it was closer to Christ.

"You must go with me," he whispered, and the beating of my heart told me that I could not refuse.

I went with him! But I shall recall none of the details of the flight; you know what a shocking scandal society enjoyed. We went to New York and lived in a hotel, and for months I floated in a dreamy happiness, the nerve dulled happiness which I should imagine becomes the normal life of an opium-eater. But sharp words and a quarrel came one night, and then I saw that my companion was growing weary of me.

"Antonio," I cried, "has our ancient love turned to a modern coldness?"

"Miss Brizman—"

"Miss Brizman!" I repeated.

"Yes. Isn't that your name? Now let me tell you something; and you may call me the most soulless scoundrel that ever lived, and I am willing to acknowledge that I am, and—"

"You are my Antonio," I broke in.

"Will you listen to me?" he exclaimed. "One afternoon on a railway train I saw you for the first time and was struck by your beauty, and then you began to remember things—I gave them to you—

your recollections were hypnotic forces at work. Wait now, don't be excited. I used to be a scientist in that line, but the public said I was a fraud. Yes, I am tired of you—I am tired of everything. A brute! Oh, yes, and a scoundrel! You will kill me? Well, then, I must leave you. Good-bye."

And so he left me.

I enter no plea for mercy; I simply give my story. I was honest in my belief; I may have been a fool, but he who has not felt the influence of that startling and almost superhuman force, a force that may play a wonderful part in the affairs of men in in the years to come—I say that he who has not felt this force is not justly fitted to sit in judgment upon me.

DAN MITERS.

CHAPTER I.

DAN MITERS was especially drunk. By this I mean that any other man in the village of Cane Hill might have been drunk—and indeed other men of that respectible community had been known to indulge too heartily in drink—but that Dan Miters, being the acknowledged drunkard of the place, was especially and particularly intoxicated. He was a man of acknowledged sense. He had, gossip said, as a prelude to some disparaging statement concerning his weakness, carried off the honors at a well-known school. One thing was certain. He expressed himself in better language than even the county judge could hope to employ, and this, at Cane Hill, was regarded as a convincing assertion of a higher education.

Dan had first come to the village as the agent of a nursery; not that sort of a nursery which would disprove the declaration that marriage, among the poor at least, is a failure to perpetuate human mis-

ery, but as the agent of a company which had fruit trees for sale. He did not thoroughly succeed in running the gauntlet of village curiosity, for villagers are critical of appearances, and a lazy lounger who sits all day at the store, while his wife is taking in washing—the utterly worthless fellow who would rather wallow in the mire with a black falsehood than to recline on a velvet couch with a bright truth; who wears a filthy shirt and one "bed-tick" suspender; who chews charity tobacco and spits at a knothole which, he thinks by the right of his own yellow slime, he has pre-empted—that fellow will criticise the clothes and facial expression of a stranger.

Dan was criticised, not only by the worthless loafer, but by the merchant, and even by the faded woman who had slipped in to exchange a few eggs for a small piece of calico. They declared that Dan's hair was too red, and that there were too many freckles on his face; and it was agreed that he did not dress as a gentleman should. The worthless loafer squirted at his pre-empted knothole and remarked:

"Now you're gittin' right down to the squar' facts."

That was a long time ago. Dan was absorbed into the community's social system, and became celebrated as the village drunkard. Previous to his

achievement of this distinction, the fame had belonged to one Peter B. Rush, and it appeared that he could never be robbed of the reputation which he had laborously acquired, but after a few years of close contest, Peter B. Rush's warmest admirers were forced to acknowledge that the palm belonged to Dan Miters. What a handy man was Miters when a comparison was needed! What an encouragement to innovation! A man, in speaking of some one who was stupidly influenced by liquor, was no longer under the necessity of saying that he was as drunk as the disreputable canine associate of the fiddler, but simply fulfilled all demands by affirming that he was as drunk as Dan Miters.

Seriously—and unfortunately we are all compelled to be serious at times—the man of twenty-five whose education had not been neglected was, at forty-five, a hopeless vagabond, with every hope trampled into the mud away down the road behind him. He did odd jobs, cleaned out cellars, and cut firewood for scolding women.

One day, when he appeared to be soberer than usual, the mayor of the village thus addressed him;

"Dan, I would like to know something about your life."

"And I, sir," Dan replied, "would like to know something about my death."

"You are a funny fellow, Dan."

"No doubt of it, sir. A corpse has been known to grin."

"Come, don't talk that way. You have been here now about twenty years and none of us know where you were born."

"And do you really want to know where I was born?"

"Yes, I'd like to know."

"Well, sir, I was born in the night."

"There you go again. Say, do you know that if you would brace up there is yet time for you to accomplish something."

"Yes, but you have tried and what have you accomplished?"

"Why, I own a good house and lot—I am married and have a family of interesting children."

"Is that all?"

"But isn't that enough?"

"Hardly, for you have not taught your children not to feel and until you do this your marriage stands as a wrong. About a year ago one of your boys lost an arm at a saw-mill. Weren't you the primary cause of his suffering, and is not the primary cause the meanest of all causes?"

"I won't talk to you," the mayor declared. "There is no reason in your argument and no humanity in your conclusions." "But come," he added in a softened voice, "why don't you make an effort to keep sober?"

"Because I don't want to keep sober."

"And why not?"

"Sobriety is the mother of thought."

"And you don't want to think—is that it?"

"Yes."

"And why don't you want to think? Your thoughts might amount to something. The greatest man, you know, is the greatest thinker."

"So is the greatest sufferer."

"And when you think you suffer, eh?"

"Yes, and so do all men. Go into the library and look about you, and what do you see?"

"Books," the mayor answered.

"And what are books?"

"Gifts from superior minds," the mayor replied.

"No," said the drunkard. "They are the records of human suffering. Every great book is an ache from a heart and a pain-throb from a brain. But what's the use of all this talk? What concerns me most at present is where am I going to get a drink?"

"There you go with your dogmatism."

"There you go, measuring the grains of my want in your half-bushel. You don't need a drink and you say that I don't. I would not presume to say what other men need, but it seems to be the province of all other men to dictate to me. Come, I am growing too sober, and shall begin to think pretty soon. Won't you please help me out? Let me have

twenty-five cents; you can spare it. A man who doesn't drink has but little real need for money, anyway. Let me have twenty-five cents and I'll do any sort of work you want me to."

"Will you help me fix up the address I've got to deliver at that political gathering?"

"Yes, I will."

"And swear that you'll never tell that you helped me?"

"Yes, I'll do that, too."

"And you will draw up a paper swearing that you didn't write the address I delivered last month to the Oddfellows? I want you to do this, for I have heard it hinted around that you had a hand in it."

"Yes, I'll do anything."

Dan was about to turn away after receiving the money, when he caught sight of a woman crossing the courthouse yard.

"Who is that?" he asked.

"Mrs. Burkley, the widow we have employed to teach our school," the mayor answered.

"Where did she come from?"

"From Wilson county, I believe. Did you ever meet her?"

"I think not," he said, and hastened toward a doggery on the opposite side of the street.

CHAPTER II.

On a hill a short distance from the village, a hill shaded by poplar trees, was an old schoolhouse, originally built of logs, but now weather-boarded and white-washed. The Widow Burkley had just told the children that they might go out and play until she called them, when the door was darkened by a reddish apparition. The widow uttered a befitting little shriek, and then, realizing that there was no serious cause for alarm, said: "Come in." She would not have extended this invitation had she not wanted to set an example of courage.

Dan Miters stepped into the room. He stood for a moment, looking at the widow, and then said: "Don't be afraid of me. I saw you yesterday and didn't know but you—"

"Is it possible?" the woman exclaimed.

"That is what I was going to ask," Dan replied, seating himself on a bench. "Twenty years sometimes make a great change in appearance, even though hearts sometimes remain the same."

"Have you come here to reproach me? Children," she added, turning to several youngsters that

showed a disposition to loiter about the door, "run along now and play."

The children vanished and the widow, looking out to see if they were within hearing, said: "I have suffered too much to bear reproach now."

"But don't you think that you deserve reproach?" he asked.

"No. I acted as I thought best. I promised to marry you and while you were with me you did exercise so strong an influence that I thought I loved you, but when you were gone, I knew that I didn't. I saw that I was charmed by your mind, but not warmed by your heart. Another man came. He was not bright; he had many foolish words, but love is sometimes best expressed in words that are foolish. You awoke my admiration; he thrilled my heart. Then I wrote and told you not to think of me again. I was buried in the roses of my own happiness. How could I think of you?"

"And you married that man?"

"Yes."

"And were you happy?"

"For a time. Then the dew fell off the flowers. What could the flowers do but wither? We went to a distant town and there he deserted me."

"Is he still living?"

"He was hanged."

"Do you love his memory?"

"No, I have learned to think, and thought is a dagger to foolish love."

"Did you know that I was here?"

"No; some one told me that you were lost at sea."

"Did you sorrow over the news?"

"No; I did not love you."

"Did you not hear something else?"

"Not until a year ago, and then I heard that you were alive and a hopeless drunkard."

"Weren't you moved at that?"

"I was moved with pity."

"And would your pity sink deeper into your heart if I were to tell you that I am the most hopeless of all drunkards? Look at me. Look." He opened his coat. "I have given my old shirt to a negro for a drink. Does your pity sink deeper?"

"Oh, please go away, George, go away. You distress me nearly to death. My God! I have suffered enough."

"Ah, but not for me. You have suffered because your own heart has been wrung; you have not suffered because of my degradation and despair. Mary, you still have it in your power to save me. With your help I can kill my appetite. I can do something for us both. Be my wife and atone for the awful wreck you made years ago."

"George, I have always been true to myself. I don't love you."

"Couldn't you learn—couldn't there be progress?"

"There could be progress, but that progress would be toward hatred."

He looked at her in silence. He took up his old hat, which had been dropped on the floor, and turned it round and round in his hand. He looked down at his shoes, from which his toes protruded. He got up with a stagger, gazed at her a moment, and then an expression, not a smile, but an expression like that which follows the swallowing of a bitter draught, broke through the red stubble about his mouth. "Mrs.—I don't know your name," he began, "but Mrs. Somebody, you are the most merciless creature that ever lived."

"The children say I'm kind."

"You have the spirit of a vampire."

"The children think I have the spirit of gentleness."

"I hope you may die the most horrible of all deaths. I pray to God that you may die of hydrophobia—I implore God that a mad dog may bury his teeth in your throat."

"Go away," she screamed. "Come, children,' she cried." "Go away from here, you monster. 'I hate you. I wish—but I can't think of anything horrible enough. Now go."

* * * * * * * *

The village was the scene of fear-inspired ferment. A report that a powerful mad dog had been seen in the neighborhood was circulated by an excited farmer. The bravest of men shudder at the sight of a mad dog. Men who would fight a grizzly bear tremble if they see a mad dog. Double fastenings were put on every door. The widow Burkley was terror-stricken. She could not be induced to leave her room. Gradually the excitement died away. School was resumed but the widow was tremulous.

She left the schoolhouse very late one evening. Two rebellious boys had been kept in. When liberated the boys ran away. The widow tried to keep up with them. She could not. She was hurrying along the path when a man came dashing past on a horse. "Mad dog! mad dog!" he yelled. The widow screamed and looked back. The dog was bounding toward her. She fainted.

No one had the courage to look for the widow. Late at night, almost a maniac, she knocked at the door of the house where she boarded.

Morning came. A startling discovery was made. Dan and the mad dog were found lying across the path near the place where the woman had fainted. The dog's teeth were buried in Dan's throat. Dan's fingers were stiffened about the dog's neck. Both were dead.

CLEM, THE OUTLAW.

CHAPTER I.

THE people of the Bald Knob neighborhood—on the Missouri Pacific railway—couldn't understand why Clem Holder should go wrong. His people were surely honest, and certainly did everything that lay within the range of their ability to give the boy a start in life, but he went wrong. But not in the tiresome, every-day manner, mind you. He didn't steal a horse and thereby invite the contempt of the neighborhood; he did not commit an offense so commonplace and so free from exposure that a man of ordinary nerve would have contemplated it without alarm. No, he jumped on a pay car, robbed the paymaster and killed a meddlesome fellow who ventured to protest, or offer advice, or something of the sort.

What a handsome fellow Clem was. He was strong and of rather good size, but his features were as delicate and as refined as a girl's. His eyes were of that peculiar blue that bespeak innocence or

deviltry, you can never determine which, and his hair was long and inclined to curl. Had he been reared in the old atmosphere of Italy, he would either have been an artist or a bandit. He had been morbidly restless all his life, dissatisfied with the present and feeling that the future had nothing for him, and when his parents had bade the world good night and gone to eternity's bed, he yielded no longer to restraint.

The Missouri Pacific Railway company offered a large reward for him. The sheriff of the county happened to want money at that time and said that he believed he would go out and lead Clem to justice. He went out on a fairly good horse and came back in a wagon; and while his friends were burying him near old Ebenezer church, some one remarked that Clem always had been a sort of independent fellow and that he was "powerful slow" in yielding to persuasion. Well, a very noted man, a great catcher of illicit distillers, said that Clem must answer for his crimes, and with a few selected men went after him. Clem met them unexpectedly and—well, he still refused to yield to persuasion, and when the fragments of the argument were gathered up, the great catcher of illicit distillers was labled and sent to his friends.

After several other attempts had been made, the arrest of Clem Holder was regarded as an eventful

but unenjoyable undertaking. The young fellow lived in the hills, rode a good horse and, in the opinion of many people who knew him, was about as near a king as an American could wish to be.

For many years Clem had been deeply in love with Silla Garrett, a handsome young woman, the belle of a hundred country dances. She was a cold piece of proud flesh. Your celebrated beauty may be cold, but she can not hope to rival the imperial chilliness of the backwoods belle. The rough homage of the fellow with his trousers in his boots inspires more of a contemptuous loftiness in a backwoods queen than the polished worship of the courtier could possibly inspire in a beauty celebrated by two continents.

Silla did not tell Clem that she would not marry him. When he had actually fallen at her feet, long before he had robbed the pay car, and implored her to be his wife, she had told him that she was so poor herself that she could not afford to marry a poor man. He had been kept so busy for a time after he committed the robbery that he did not have an opportunity to call on her, but several days after he had parted with the great catcher of illicit distillers he rode up to the fence surrounding old man Garrett's house and yelled: "Hello, in there!"

Silla came to the door and exclaimed: "Why,

Clem Holder, what on earth are you doin' here?"

"Oh, I'm out payin' up a few calls that I happened to owe. I've been kept pretty busy lately. I used to think that I might never get into business, but I've had no cause to complain since I took up railroad work."

"Clem Holder, you ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"Oh, I reckon it ain't as bad as that. I don't see why a man should be ashamed of himself when he's done as well as he can. In this life we ought to be censured for failin' to do our duty, but when we have improved each shinin' hour, as the feller says, we ought to be complimented. Say, where's the old man?"

"Gone to mill."

"Where's the old woman?"

"Up stairs sick with a headache."

"May I come in?"

"No."

"Why?"

"Why? Do you reckon I want you to come in our house and be shot there?"

"Who's goin' to shoot me?"

"Oh, what's the use in askin' such foolish questions? You know the railroad is after you."

"Yes, and the railroad is about fast enough to catch me, but the train is hardly due yet. Let me

come in, Silla; I've got somethin' to say to you."

"Can't you say it out there?"

"I'm afraid somebody might hear me."

"No, you ain't. A man that ain't afraid to rob a railroad ain't afraid to have anybody hear what he says."

"From a woman's standpoint, no," he answered, stroking his horse's mane, "but from a man's standpoint, yes. A feller that ain't afraid to fight a brave man is sometimes afraid to have a coward hear him talk. Silla, you told me some time ago that you couldn't afford to marry a poor man. You knew how I loved you, knew that your words stabbed me with a frost-covered knife. I wanted money—I wanted you, so I robbed a pay car. I'm not so mighty rich yet, but I've got enough to keep you from work. Now, you just get up here behind me and we'll leave the country. I'll take you away off somewhere and we can live as happy as a king and queen. Come, Silla."

"Look here, man, do you take me for a fool?"

"I'd like to take you for anything. Come, Silla."

"Nonsense, Clem. Do you reckon I could marry a robber and a—a— murderer?"

"I am a robber, but I'm not a murderer. I robbed because I wanted you, and I shot because men wanted me. Men wanted me for money. They didn't care anything about justice. They wanted

the reward, and a constant seeker after reward ain't any better than a robber, but that's neither here nor there. I want you to go with me."

"Oh, I can't Clem."

"Why?"

"Oh, you know why. It would be so awful. I'd have to go away where I'd never see any of my folks again and—oh, I just can't."

"Is it because you love some other man?"

"No."

"If you do I will kill the man."

"I don't love anybody but—but—"

"Out with it."

"But you, Clem."

"Thank God for them words. Let me get down and kiss you."

"Oh, Clem, you are the foolishest man I ever saw."

"Not foolish, but in love, Silla. May I come in the house?"

"No, no; I couldn't think of such a think; pap might come home."

"Well, what could he do?"

"He could give me an awful goin' over. No, Clem, you mustn't come in. Some time you may, but not now. Say, Clem, if I ask you something, will you think me funny?"

"Nothin' that's beautiful can be funny."

"Well, I wanted to ask you this—now I just know you'll think I'm funny."

"No, I won't."

"Honest?" and then she laughed. Talk of honesty to a robber. "Honest?" she repeated.

"Honest."

"Well, how much money did you get out of that pay car? Now, there, I told you you'd think I was funny."

He laughed and affectionately stroked his horse's mane.

"Honest, now, don't you think I'm funny?"

"No. Let me see. I got about sixteen thousand dollars."

"Gracious alive!" she gasped, and then exclaimed, "yonder comes pap. You'd better go."

But he did not go; he sat stroking his horse's mane, waiting for old man Garrett. The old fellow tumbled the bag of meal on the fence, turned his horse into a lot and then slowly came forward with a scowl on his face. He stopped, put one foot on a low stump and then asked: "What are you doin' here, Clem Holder?"

"Oh, sorter restin' awhile."

"Well, this is a mighty pore place to rest. I've been livin' here fifty odd year and I ain't never had no rest yet, so if you are in need of that artickle, I reckon you'd better shove on somewhar else." "Silla," he called, "go in the house. Now, look here, Clem Holder," he added when the girl dis-

appeared, "I want to tell you one thing, and that's this: You must keep away from my house. I never did have any too much use for you, and your robbery and killin' ain't improved things none. What are you hangin' round here for, anyway?"

"I love your daughter."

"Love the devil!" the old man stormed.

"No, love an angel."

"Well then," the old man replied, with an air of compromise, "we'll say that the devil loves an angel; but that ain't what I want to git at. You must keep away from my house. I don't want to be took up on your account and put in jail, and I won't be if I can help it, nuther. You have ruined yourself and disgraced all your friends, and I'll be blamed if you shall draw me into it. Do you hear?"

"Yes, but I must tell you that I won't keep away except on one condition."

"Well, and what is it?"

"That Silla will keep away with me."

"Clem Holder, I don't want to hurt you."

"All right, and I don't intend you shall, so, you see, we have come to a pretty good understandin'. Now, let me ask you a few questions: Did the railroad ever help you in any particular way?"

"Help me! The infernal scoundrels killed my cow and never paid me more than half price."

"Well, then, they robbed you, didn't they?"

"Of course, they did."

"Ah, hah, and I robbed them."

"But what's that got to do with me?"

"A good deal. I will give you the price of a hundred cows if you will give me your daughter."

"Clem Holder, I have struggled along the best I could and managed to live somehow, without ever takin' a dishonest cent, and it is most too late to begin now. Go on away from here and don't come back again."

"There's no use talkin', old man, I can't do it. If you won't give me your daughter, I will do you as I did the railroad—rob you."

"And I will do you as I did Buck Goodall ten years ago—kill you."

"All right, old man, I won't deny you the pleasure of tryin', but I'll protest against the accomplishment, as the feller says. Well, I must be goin'. Good day."

CHAPTER II.

ANOTHER attempt to capture Clem Holder was made, and all that kept a daring deputy sheriff from biting the dust was the fact that a rain had fallen the night before. But Clem was pushed so hard this time that he fled to the mountains.

One day a man called at old man Garrett's and asked for Silla. She came into the room and the man said;

"I want to talk sense to you for a few moments."

"That is something remarkable," she answered. "It isn't often that a man wants to talk sense to a woman."

He bowed and thanked her. "That fellow, Holder," said he, "has given it out that he got sixteen thousand dollars from the railroad company, but he didn't—he got only seven hundred."

"Is that all?" she asked, with falling countenance.

"Every cent."

"Then, why are they tryin' so hard to catch him?"

"To make an example of him."

"But what have I got to do with it?"

"A good deal. You can help us catch him."

"But why should I want you to catch him?"

"Now, miss, let me talk sense. If you should run away and marry him—hold on, he broke off, holding up one hand. "I know that you are going to say that it's none of my business, but be patient a moment. If you were to run away with him he would lead you a dog's life. He hasn't money enough to get anywhere and it would simply be a dodge and a fight all the time. You are fitted for better things. If you had money enough to go to a large city and put on a handsome dress, you would soon become celebrated as the—now, pardon me—as the most beautiful woman in the entire country. In society, a queen is nowhere in comparison with a beautiful woman; and you would stand at the head of the list. Great men would fall down and worship you and you could marry a foreign duke and live in a magnificent palace. It is a woman's duty to make the most of herself. Love is all well enough as a poetic idea, but ill-mated love can not last. Leading a dodging life—a life of hardship—you would soon lose your beauty and then your outlaw husband would find you a burden on his hands. Now, you arrange it so we can capture him and we will make you a queen. We will give you two thousand dollars in money and will send you to St. Louis in a splendid palace car, all your own. Be sensible."

"But how can I help you catch him?"

"Easily enough. The next time you see him you can make an appointment to meet him somewhere. You can give him something in a glass of water to make him sleep and then slip a pair of handcuffs over his hands."

"Oh, I don't see how I could."

"You can, easily enough, if you are sensible. I tell you that it is your duty to make the most of yourself. Nature has done her part, and now you must do yours."

"Oh, I don't know what to do. But I would like so much to live in a palace."

"You can, just as well as not."

"I wish I knew what to do."

"You will know when you have studied over this matter in a sensible way. I will hang around in the neighborhood. When he comes again you make an appointment to meet him."

"But he may not come again soon."

"Yes, he will." The officer of the law knew that the robber would come soon. The shrewd fellow had adroitly sent to the mountains a report that Silla was to be married.

Several days passed. It was Sunday. Old Garrett and his wife were at church. Silla was at home. A slight noise attracted her attention. She went to the door. Clem had just ridden up to the fence.

"Why, what are you doin' here?"

"Lookin' for a man."

"What do you want with him?"

"Want to kill him."

"What for?"

"Because he's goin' to marry you."

"Oh, what a goose you are. Nobody's goin' to marry me, that is, not now."

"I heard you were goin' to be married."

"You've heard more'n I ever did. Clem, you know I couldn't marry anybody but you."

"Well, but you won't even marry me."

"Yes, I will some time, but I can't now. Why haven't you been to see me?" she asked.

"If I had thought you wanted to see me," he said, "I would have risked everything and come; they have been pushin' me mighty close lately. May I come in?"

"No, not now; but if you will come next Sunday you may."

"Say I may come in now."

"No, next Sunday. Everybody will be away then and we'll just have a lovely time."

"I will be here."

The old people went to church the following Sunday. The girl eagerly watched for the coming of the young man. He came. He did not ride up to the fence; he came stealthily out of the woods. The

girl met him at the door and kissed him. He attempted to take her in his arms but she drew back and said:

"No, not now. After a while you may. Sit down and talk to me nice—tell me how much you love me."

He put his Winchester rifle beside his chair. "If I were to tell you how much I love you, I—oh, I couldn't do it, that's all." He remained silent for a few moments and then said: "Now that I have got in here I don't hardly know what to say." He was silent again. "I know, though," he began after a time, "that no human bein' was ever loved as much as you are. I have loved you ever since you were a child, and it has grown on me. The stronger I got the more I loved you. I have always had you in mind as an angel—the emblem of all that is good, and if I should lose confidence in you I wouldn't care to live. I know it sounds strange when I talk of anybody bein' good when I am so bad myself, but I can't help it."

"Oh, you'll never have cause to lose confidence in me, Clem. You look tired, dear."

"I am a little worn, for they push me mightily sometimes."

"Let me fix you something to eat?"

"No, I ain't hungry. Silla," he suddenly spoke up, "I will always be gentle with you, it don't make

any difference if I have killed men. Oh, you are an angel." Her hair had fallen loose, and, in a silken maze, was hanging about her shoulders. "I do believe you are the most beautiful creature in the world, and it wouldn't make any difference where you might go, all the other women would have to take a back seat."

"I hope you'll always think so, dear. Do let me fix you something. Oh, I have some of the best blackberry cordial you ever drank. Won't you drink some of it for me—just because I made it?"

"Yes, I will do anything for you."

She brought the wine in a teacup and he drank it.

"What's the matter with you, angel?" he asked. "You look scared."

"Nothin'. I was just thinkin'—just sorter afraid that they might catch you."

"Not much danger. The only way they can do is to slip up on me."

He talked of his love. "You are noddin', dear. Won't you lie down on the bed for a little while? I will keep watch and tell you if I see anybody comin'."

"No, I must go putty soon. I must—I must—" he was asleep. She sprang to a table and snatched a pair of handcuffs out of a drawer, and then, with the quickness of fright, snapped them on his wrists.

She ran to the door and looked out. No one in sight. She looked back at the sleeping man and, uttering a shriek, sprang at him and wildly tried to tear the handcuffs off his wrists.

"Clem!" she cried; "Clem, wake up—oh, my darling, wake up! Oh, I don't want to be a queen, I don't want men to worship me—I want your love. Clem, oh, for God's sake, wake up! My head was turned, but it isn't now. Oh, I can't get them off. Oh—"

Three men entered the room. "Get out of here!" she shrieked. "He is mine and you shan't have him."

The men seized him. He did not awake. "Let him be," she screamed, throwing her arms about his neck and passionately kissing him. "Oh, you devils —you hell-hounds. Don't take him away. Oh, for mercy's sake don't!" she implored, sinking upon her knees. They dragged Clem toward the door. She shrieked and fell on the floor, and one of the men in his excitement trod on her beautiful hair.

* * * * * * *

The prisoner deserved no mercy, the judge said, and so said the jury.

* * * * * * *

A gallows was erected near the railroad track, and a man slowly swung to and fro—a weird accompaniment to the screaking of a beam overhead.

* * * * * * *

Two men were riding along a lonely road. "What peculiar noise is that?" one of them asked.

"You have heard of Clem the outlaw, haven't you? He loved old Garrett's daughter. She's down there in the hollow, crying. Goes down there every day. She's all the time trying to tear something off her wrists. Crazy!"

[THE END.]

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